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Skin Deep

Tattoo Magazine

SEPTEMBER '10
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ARTIST INTERVIEWS

Danny Knight
Miss Arianna
Mark Bailey
Dave Perry
Demon

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TALKING SKIN AND BONE WITH LEPA

Reading
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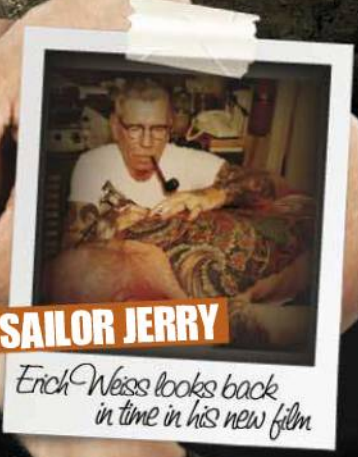

SAILOR JERRY
Erich Weiss looks back in time in his new film

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I don't know about you people but after Tattoo Jam this past weekend, we're shattered!

On that very subject, can I say thank you to everybody involved who went into making it a success. We'll be reporting on the event in a future issue but seriously, more hard work than should have been allowed went into organising the Jam this year and it showed. More artists, more events, more people through the door. This is everything we had hoped for when the concept was first born. Once again - thank you to everybody who turned up and made the event the success it was.

Moving on for the time being, this issue we bring you more skin from around the world in the shape of a special South American report - and it's good to see that despite the gulfs of difference in our cultures, the basic requirement where tattoo art is concerned, remains the same. Highly personalised, highly professional good looking, clean work. This is a good sign. Looking back through the last few years of Skin Deep and taking a bird's eye view on inking as a global art industry, it's heart-warming to see tattooists and tattoo artists taking it upon themselves to continually improve the shape of our world in the eyes of those not yet acquainted.

Or as Billy Connolly once said, "It's always great to see one more of us and one less of them" - or something like that, and I don't think he was talking ink, but it's a good quote all the same.

Flip to page 66 and you'll find one of the finest examples of commitment to the art in the shape of Lepa. Not content with being naturally beautiful, the art she has on board will stop even the most sceptical of people. If you can't appreciate what's going on there, you simply don't understand art in any form.

And then there's Erich Weiss – a man whose love of the art has propelled him to spend countless hours in pursuit of the meaning behind another man's career. Documenting as many twists and turns as he was able to find in Sailor Jerry's life, Weiss brings us a fascinating movie worthy of both your time and money.

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Rewind to a few weeks ago and you'll find the first Reading convention going full steam ahead. Yet more good people committing themselves to furthering the cause. Some may say that there are too many conventions popping up all over the country at the moment, but that's not true. So long as they are spaced evenly and in different regions, then it gives those who can't afford to travel the world an opportunity to join in and for those who can, well, the sky's the limit – and there really are people who will go to as many as humanly possible.

We think you'll agree when we say that if there's one thing Skin Deep achieves every issue, it's that we're pretty damn good at cataloguing this ever growing fascination and love of collecting a truly unique kind of art. Some don't understand why we do it, but then, they never will until they too are indoctrinated with the needle.

And there you have it - another snapshot of the world in ink in a handy sized format. Next month – changes are afoot, we're very excited and probably need to get out more!

David Gamble

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FALLOUT

Seen an interesting clipping in the press? Got something that you'd like reviewed or featured? Got some spare chocolate or beer? Send them to: Skin Deep, The Old School, Higher Kinnerton, Chester CH4 9AJ OR EMAIL: editor@skindeep.co.uk

SEVENTH CIRCLE CUSTOM JEWELLERY

Rock & Roll custom jewellery company Seventh Circle Artworks will be showcasing their new Lucky 7 Tattoo jewellery collection along with a photo gallery by Zuleika Fray Photography at the 6th London Tattoo Convention in Tobacco Dock from 24-26th September.

The new pieces were created from original designs by George Scoote from Lucky 7 Tattoos. There will be pieces available to buy and order on the day or if you would like have your own custom piece designed and made for you feel free to come and have a chat with us. Recent clients of Seventh Circle Artworks have included the doom bands Saint Vitus and Candlemass and Haunted Tattoos London. Check out the new collection being modelled by Nina Kate at *www.seventhcircleartworks.com.*

KINGS CROSS TATTOO PARLOUR

Kings Cross Tattoo Parlour is happy to announce that xTetex, from PMA will be guesting here for only 3 days, from the 19th to the 21st of August! Hurry up and book your appointment! You can check some of his amazing work at: *www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/album.php?aid=11553&id=100000650917375&ref=mf.* Kings Cross Tattoo Parlour, 185 Kings Cross Road WC1X 9DB London- UK 0207 8374 634 *www.kingscrosstattooparlour.co.uk*

GUST SPIT

LA tattooist Dan Lins will be working at the tattoo shop Prestwich, Manchester from the 24th August till the 24th september. you can view Dans work on www.myspace.com/tat2danl for more info phone the tattoo shop 07791036587 or you can contact by email info@the-tattoo-shop.co.uk

NEW ARTIST WANTED FOR UNDERGROUND TATTOO, BIRMINGHAM

You MUST be able to draw and have a solid portfolio of both your tattoo work and drawings.

Studio experience is a must as you will be responsible for the running of the tattoo side of the studio and developing the business. Sorry but we don't need apprentices. We are a sober studio so if you do drugs or go on benders then please don't apply as it will save us all grief in the long run. Please either send examples of your work and experience to *tattoo.studio@talktalk.net*

JUST THE (TAT) TWO OF US!

Skin Deep Magazine would like to say congratulations to Mark and Emma Bailey.

Mark and Emma got married on Saturday the 17th of July. This lovely pair exchanged nuptials at Baskerville Hall, Hay on Wye and by all accounts was an absolutely fabulous day. All the best for the future guys!!

TRUE TATTOO

True Tattoo is a brand new large, spacious studio in the heart of Croydon town centre.

The studio strives to move away from the cramped, hectic feel of a lot of studios, offering a relaxed, comfortable environment with a warm welcome. Custom tattoo, body piercing and thermal cautery branding are all on offer. You can find them at True Tattoo, 49 Frith Road, Croydon, CR0 1TB. Or *myspace.com/truetattoolondon.*

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INTERVIEW WITH

ERICH WEISS

WRITER/DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

INTERVIEW NEIL & ALEX

HORI SMOKU SAILOR JERRY

THE LIFE OF NORMAN COLLINS

Having just had its premier screening in the UK, Hori Smoku Sailor Jerry is a feature length documentary exploring the roots of American Tattooing through the life of Norma 'Sailor Jerry' Collins. Sailor Jerry is considered by many to be the founding father of American tattooing, with many of his designs still worn today by young and old alike. We caught up with Erich Weiss, the writer, director and producer of this wonderfully nostalgic film upon his return to the States to find out a little behind the making of Hori Smoku...

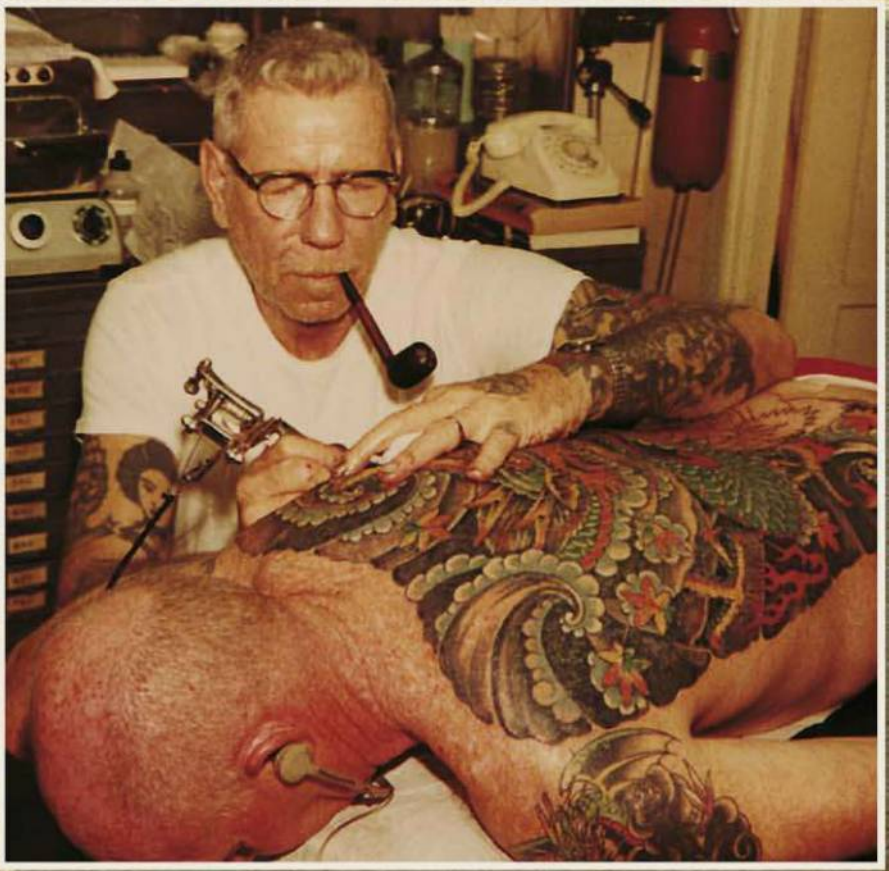
SO YOU WERE OVER HERE TO PROMOTE TO FILM, HOW DID IT GO DOWN?
It was fun! We showed it last Wednesday (21st July). We had a good time. It was the first time we've ever shown it officially in London. And we've done so many in the States since we premiered it in 2008.

SO I TAKE IT THE OLD-TIME TATTOO GUYS WHERE QUITE POSITIVE ABOUT THE INFORMATION PORTRAYED IN THE FILM?
Yes, obviously when I made the film, I wanted the public to like it but I also wanted tattoo artists to like it and not think it was bullshit. I wanted it to be something I could be proud of.

SO IS TATTOOING AN INTEREST OF YOURS?
Well I grew up in pretty much a tattooing town (Philadelphia) and I got tattooed when I was fourteen and I'm thirty-seven now so you can imagine. And a lot of my friends all grew up to be tattoo artists. Guys like Jason Goldberg, Dave Fox, all those guys. So I was always around tattooing and interested in it.

SO WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH INTEREST OUT THERE TO TALK ABOUT AN OLD TIME TATTOOIST?
First I was asked by a guy called Steve Graff, who did the licensing deal for the movie. He asked me to interview Ed Hardy and Mike Malone, just to get the story on Sailor Jerry. And I said sure, I'll go down. And when I came back, after just talking to Ed, I said if you'll give me some cash [laughs] I'd love to make a documentary. I mean, I would've done it for free anyway.

OBVIOUSLY YOU'VE TRAVELLED AROUND, FINDING SOME OF THE OLD GUYS AND STUFF. WERE THEY QUITE FORTHCOMING OR WERE SOME...
They all told me to fuck off, really! [laughs]. No it just took, like, three years to get all the interviews and stuff together. You know, I had a lot of people vouch for me. The first time I called Mike Malone he told me to fuck off and hung up the phone!



I mean all these guys lived crazy awesome lives and they are just filled with stories - real natural storytellers.

WHO WAS THE HARDEST PERSON TO GET IN TOUCH WITH?
Probably Zeke Owen, it took, like, a year and a half just to track him down. The first time I tracked him down he'd just had a heart attack and I couldn't find him anywhere. And then finally I found him working in a shop. This thing was just so organic, sometimes if people were comfortable enough with me, they'd call ahead for me and say, you know, "this guy's not an asshole, you can talk to him".

SO WE'VE ONLY SEEN A BRIEF SNIPPET OF THE DOCUMENTARY ITSELF, BUT WHAT WE'VE SEEN IS FANTASTIC, IT GOT OUR INTEREST STRAIGHT AWAY. WHERE DID YOU GET ALL THE FILM CLIPS FROM?
It took forever! I went to the national archives; I went to the Bishop Museum in Hawaii. I was just scouring 1940's newsreels, and going into a lot of university archives, going through old newspapers. Yeah, it was a shit load of research to be done. And then a lot of the tattoo pictures, Lyle Tuttle helped me out a lot; he's got a museum. Ed Hardy helped me out as well. I don't know if you saw it but I ran into Sailor Jerry's son David, in Honolulu. After I pulled my first cut he ended up giving me all these old photos nobody's ever seen before and gave me a bit from Sailor Jerry's radio show. The only time you'll ever hear Sailor Jerry's voice is in the film.

SO ARE WE LOOKING AT A HORI SMOKU PART TWO?
I think what I'm gonna do is try and release a special edition and put up a tribute to people like Mike Malone and everyone who has helped out on the film. You got huge storytellers in the film and I've only got like, 73 minutes to tell a story. I mean all these guys lived crazy awesome lives and they're just filled with stories, real natural storytellers.

I don't think I wanna' exploit this thing too much. I mean I like it, I'm proud if it, I like what it has to say. I don't want to, you know, flog a dead horse.

YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT THE EXPLOITATION, YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY SEEN THE ED HARDY CLOTHING AND ALL THAT MERCHANDISING. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MASS MERCHANDISE AND MASS PHENOMENA OF TATTOO IMAGERY?
I was talking to Ed about that and he has such a great case. He said he's been working in a tattoo shop for nearly 40 years. You know, I'm just some knucklehead who walks into a tattooing shop and that's how they make money. And if some fool wants to buy some bejewelled clothing I mean, be my guest.

TRUE, AS LONG AS HE WINS OUT IN THE END, THAT'S THE MAIN THING.
Definitely. Ed, he's the artist so that's great. Some people do things that others don't. It's an artistic trade; they make money doing it. Have you ever walked into a tattoo shop and asked the guy to do it for free? I haven't.

IT MAKES A LOT OF SENSE, AS YOU SAY. SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY THE MYSTIQUE HAS BEEN WATERED DOWN SLIGHTLY.
Any kind of rebel culture, especially in the western world it gets commercialised. It sucks. But, it still happens.

IT'S TRUE, AS YOU SAY, SOMEONE WITH A TATTOO WAS SEEN AS A REBEL. NOW EVERYONE HAS THEM.
There's a part of the film, at the end where Lyle (Tuttle) talks about that. He says a little baby sees a tattoo on his mom's butt, and then he sees a tattoo on his teachers arm, and then the cop who arrests him has a tattoo, by the end the tattoo is gonna look like a symbol of authority and by the end he's not gonna wanna touch it.

THAT'S QUITE A GOOD ANALOGY ACTUALLY. IT MAKES A LOT OF SENSE. DO YOU THINK THIS FILM IS QUITE IMPORTANT IN PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF TRADITION OF TATTOOS FOR THE YOUNGER AUDIENCES AS WELL?
I definitely think so. The film's a loose, loose biography on Sailor Jerry, it's more about the culture of American tattooing especially. And what happened in the 40's, 50's and 60's in Hawaii and the World War two generation. I think about 40 minutes of the film reflects on Hotel Street alone. That's the stuff I find fascinating.The superstitions and the stories are great but the actual roots and historical aspect are really, really cool and interesting.

ARE THERE ANY STORIES THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO THE FINAL FILM?
There are a whole bunch of stories. Some that aren't really fit for print! But when I did the first cut of the film it was over two hours long. So I think a lot of that footage will go on the special edition because I go into the symbolism and the significance of tribal tattoos. Then there's a load of colourful stories from the guys. Shit I could do a whole DVD just on the guys from Philadelphia alone.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT THE UK TATTOO COMMUNITY TO KNOW ABOUT THE FILM AND YOURSELF?
Well I'm hoping to get that released as soon as possible in the UK. I'd love to get that out in the holidays, I'm working on it right now. There'll always be updates on the website (www.horismokumovie.com) and I'm gonna be throwing a book together about the movie. Just because there's so much stuff I collected, especially the stuff about Hotel Street. What was going on about that time was so kind of dirty and amazing. You gotta love it!

I SEE IN SOME OF YOUR PICTURES THAT YOU WEAR A FULL SLEEVE, WHO'S DONE YOUR TATTOOS FOR YOU?
Martin Lacasse from Philly', Old City Tattoos and Jason Goldberg, he's actually one of the producers on the film.

SO WHAT'S NEXT FOR ERICH WEISS, ANYTHING ELSE ON THE HORIZON?
Erm, I'm working on another documentary about modern historians of 'fontography' and they work with a lot of old legends like Ed Roth and I just like that. It's kind of a dying trade and I want to document it.

IT'S NICE TO HAVE GUYS LIKE YOURSELF DOCUMENT STUFF BECAUSE, LIKE YOU SAY ONCE IT'S GONE, IT'S GONE AND THAT'S IT.
I'm so happy we could get a Mike Malone on film just because it's really dedicated him.

THANKS VERY MUCH AND GOOD LUCK WITH THE RELEASE OF THE FILM IN THE UK AND YOUR FUTURE PROJECTS ERICH.

TEXT **MARK STEER**
MAIN PHOTOGRAPHY **SCOTT MORGAN**

REVOLVER TATTOO ROOMS, TORQUAY

DAVE PERRY

Located in the lively seaside town of Torquay, Revolver Tattoo Rooms is a studio fast developing a growing reputation within the tattoo world. Warm, friendly and with a tardis like quality once you walk in through its front door, this is a unique world created by its colorful owner and lead tattoo artist Dave Perry. A man with more than a few stories to tell...

Dave's journey into the tattoo industry has taken quite a few interesting twists and turns through the years. From TV shows to magazine publishing, art schools to A-list parties, it is fair to say that this was a man who had 'done a bit', before turning his back on it all to dedicate himself fully to his love of tattooing. Now having returned to his home town of Torquay, Dave has the air of a man who has finally found what he has been looking for, and, with his studio Revolver Tattoo Rooms quickly becoming one of 'the' places to get tattooed in the South West, he seems more than content with his lot these days.

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I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT YOU'VE TAKEN A PRETTY COLORFUL ROUTE INTO THE TATTOO INDUSTRY. FILL US IN A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND.

You're not wrong… it's been a bit of a winding road. I got my first tattoo set-up during the 90s while I was living in London. I had not long finished studying for my degree at the Bath Academy of Art and my landlord at the time was always coming back from our local pub with some dodgy piece of gear or other to make money with. Sometimes it was a car engine, others a python, on this occasion it was a carrier bag full of tattoo gear. 'Here boy, we can make some money with this'… or words to that effect. I remember just looking at it and thinking… 'bloody hell!' I naively sought out a few local artists at the time to ask for advice on how it all worked, only to be told to 'fuck off', and quite rightly so.

I DECIDED TO GET MORE AND MORE WORK DONE ON MYSELF, SO I COULD WATCH THE ARTISTS WORK AND PUT A FEW THINGS TOGETHER. SOME WERE HELPFUL, SOME DIDN'T SAY A WORD.

I was always looking for new mediums to work in, but had never considered working on living flesh before. It seemed exciting but completely alien. It was around this time that I began to get work in television, presenting on shows for Channel 4 and Sky, and what with the shooting schedules and my magazine commitments, learning to tattoo had to take a back seat for a while. But it was never forgotten.

As time passed I decided to get more and more work done on myself, so I could watch the artists work and put a few things together. Some were helpful, some didn't say a word, but slowly I began to figure things out. Sessions were spent sat in front of the kitchen cooker, watching out for jacket potatoes that had been put in the oven, while working on friends and family until eventually it became clear that this was all I wanted to do with my life. It felt right. It was all I could think about and from that moment on things would never be the same again

DO YOU THINK THAT FORMAL ART TRAINING IS BENEFICIAL TO A TATTOOIST?

Definitely. Some things in life are what I like to call 'God Gifts'. Some people can sing, some can't, some people are fast and some aren't, and some people can just draw, while others can't. But you must never take these gifts for granted; they all need fine tuning and perfecting. What a formal art training gives you is a better understanding of things like composition, form and colour theory. It also takes instinctive ability and gives it a level of confidence that can only come from nurture. I have worked with some very good tattooists that have fallen apart when asked to draw simple figures and faces. A formal art training would have prepared them better for that. It's not essential to have it, but I think it really helps. I think it is harder to be a top artist without it. Not impossible, but definitely harder.

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU WERE ONCE VOTED ONE OF THE UK'S 50 MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELORS?

Ha, ha! Yes… in 1996 Company Magazine voted me one of their 50 most eligible bachelors. Is that a first for the tattoo industry? Has anybody else in the tattoo industry ever received such an award? Long time ago now though.

BUT YOU TURNED YOUR BACK ON IT ALL TO CONCENTRATE ON TATTOOING?

Absolutely. Skin is the ultimate canvas; there is nothing more bad ass than the stuff we do. No greater artistic thrill than working on living flesh in a medium that offers no eraser. Tattooing had been something that had been burning inside of me for a long time, but had always taken a bit of a back seat to my writing and television work. However, whenever I got tattooed I was still asking the questions and putting the puzzle together. Then putting in to practice what I had picked up. It was an exciting way to learn an art form, but frustrating too. It still is… you never stop learning, you never stop wanting to be better.

Eventually, more and more people were getting in touch with me, looking for work and it became apparent that I could actually make a good living out of doing what I loved. So that's what I did. I put all other interests aside and concentrated on my tattooing. Now it's my life. I feel the time was right and everything just came together for a reason. It's funny really; there are a lot of tattooists trying to get on TV these days… I just went the opposite route.

HOW LONG HAS YOUR STUDIO BEEN OPEN NOW?

We've been open for business at Revolver for over three and a half years, and I have to say it's been quite a ride. With any new shop it takes time to build up confidence in your local area, and to get enough work out there to start bringing new customers to the door. I am a great believer that there is no better advert for any tattooist than a happy customer walking around showing off their new ink to anyone who's interested. That is why customer care is so important. Studios who don't take the time to treat their customers well are certainly missing a trick, no matter how good their artists. Little details make a big difference to people. Especially when they're a bit nervous or apprehensive about what is ahead of them. The days of the surly, intimidating tattoo studio are fast becoming numbered. Customers are far more discerning these days; they expect to be treated well.➲

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DAVE PERRY

REVOLVER TATTOO ROOMS, TORQUAY

AND HOW'S LIFE ON THE ENGLISH RIVIERA TREATING YOU?

Marvellous, it's good to be back in Torquay. I was here and always had it in my head that one day, when I opened my own shop, it would be here. However, I do get frustrated by just how much the town itself has become run down … but that's a conversation for another time. Maybe I should run for Mayor one day.

NOT AT ALL LIKE MIAMI THEN?

Er no, not really. We do have palm trees and beaches, but the weather is nowhere near as good, and we very rarely get rock stars or bikini clad models walking into our shop. I have been known to throw a few Ami James style tantrums though…

LIKE MANY OTHER ARTISTS YOU DIDN'T COME INTO TATTOOING VIA THE TRADITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE. YET YOU ARE A BIG FAN OF THAT SYSTEM FOR GETTING NEW TATTOOISTS INTO THE INDUSTRY AREN'T YOU?

Without question an apprenticeship is the best way to get into this industry. It didn't work out that way for me but there is so much you need to know, so much you need to find out, and to have much of that knowledge drip fed to you is invaluable. It must be wonderful to have a mentor to talk to and ask questions of. I'd still love to have one now. Learning by yourself is really, really tough, and in all honestly pretty irresponsible. It's also very lonely, but it is amazing just how many great artists have started out that way.

BUT THE INDUSTRY IS A LOT MORE OPEN THESE DAYS...

I AM A GREAT BELIEVER THAT THERE IS NO BETTER ADVERT FOR ANY TATTOOIST THAN A HAPPY CUSTOMER WALKING AROUND SHOWING OFF THEIR NEW INK TO ANYONE WHO'S INTERESTED. THAT IS WHY CUSTOMER CARE IS SO IMPORTANT.

Yes it is. But the most valuable information is still very, very hard to come by. You have to earn it one way or another; no-one has a divine right to tattoo.

WHAT'S THE AMBIENCE AND ATMOSPHERE LIKE AT REVOLVER TATTOO ROOMS?

Most of our customers tell us it is one of the cleanest and friendliest studios they have ever been in, and that makes me smile every time I hear it. There are no egos at Revolver, everybody is genuinely interested in what each other is doing, and everybody will always go the extra yard for each other. We laugh a lot, the cups of tea flow freely, and despite all of the banter and loud music we take our work very, very seriously indeed. I genuinely believe that everyone who works there would still turn up tomorrow if they won the lottery because we all love what we do, and we all love working with each other.

The studio even has its own signature tattoo

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that everybody who works here has tattooed on their body somewhere. We are bonded by ink you see, and wherever we end up in the future we will always have those symbols of our time together. It really is a very cool environment in which to tattoo and get tattooed.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR TEAM?
Well, I have worked with a number of artists at Revolver through the years, but my current team is without a doubt the best I have had alongside me, and they are only going to get better with time.

Danny has been with me since I opened the studio, and was my first apprentice. He dropped out of grammar school three and a half years ago to take up his apprenticeship and has now been tattooing full-time for over a year. He has a fantastic talent for tribal and dot work and has quickly built up a very loyal customer base with both these styles.

Dris D joined me almost two years ago now after returning to the West Country from Australia, where he had been living and working. He seems to think of nothing but tattooing 24/7, and spends most of his spare time painting in oils. I truly believe that in the next 10 years he is going to be one of the best tattooists in the country.

We have two apprentices at the studio, Lauren and Richard both of whom are now into their second years and coming along nicely, and a female piercer, Shelley, who joined me around a year and a half ago has become one of the best piercers in the South West. She's also the studio muscle!

As a team I trust each one of them implicitly. There are no prima donnas, just a talented bunch of people pulling together to do what they love.

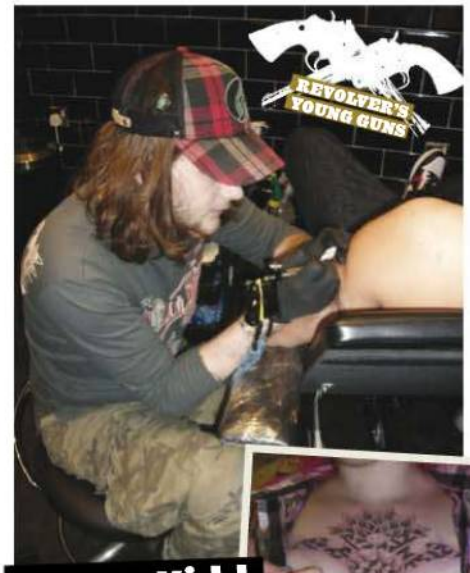
DO YOU PERSONALLY HAVE A FAVORITE STYLE OF TATTOOING?
I enjoy realism. I guess that stems from years and years of life drawing. I'd much rather tattoo a realistic looking animal or portrait for a customer than do a more traditional style design. It just feels more natural to me. I like the challenge. I also like putting outsized tattoos on people. Stuff you can see from across the street.

IS YOUR WORK LARGELY CUSTOM THESE DAYS, OR AS A STUDIO DO YOU STILL RELY ON WALK-INS?
We still get our full share of walk-ins at the shop, especially during the summer, but personally I am largely booked out these days by customers wanting me to produce custom pieces for them. It seems that with every year the work is getting bigger and bigger, especially on the girls. In fact, it's great to see so many ladies now daring to get larger pieces of work. The female body is so wonderfully curvy and it doesn't take much to accentuate a customer's shape with a well-placed design.

I HEAR THAT YOU ARE ALSO A BIT OF MACHINE COLLECTOR?
Dris calls me a 'machine chaser', which I think is a great term. I'm always on the lookout for that perfect machine to elevate my work to the next level. I can't help it; they are my one big indulgence. Tattoo machines are just so seductive. I love buzzing a new machine for the first time.

AND IS THAT YOUR 'ONLY' BIG INDULGENCE?
Well, I also have a weakness for collecting sunglasses… and Manchester United shirts which never get worn and sit in a pile on my wardrobe floor. Every two seasons a new shirt comes out and I just have to have it… then never wear it again.
'My name is Dave and I am a football shirt addict…' (laughs)

WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE ON WHAT YOU WILL AND WON'T TATTOO?
Well, if I'm not comfortable with it, I won't take it on. I don't tattoo faces, willies or ball bags. I'm sorry but sitting there holding another man's knob for half an hour is not my idea of fun. I also avoid tribal like the plague. I just



Danny Kidd

How long have you been working at Revolver?
Since day dot. I helped Dave paint the walls when he first moved in and have loved every minute of it since.

How did you end up at the tattoo studio?
I had been in contact with Dave over the phone and we eventually set up a date to meet. When I came in and met Dave I could tell straight away that it was a nice friendly environment and we got to speaking about the future aims of the studio and what was hoped to be achieved. It's a good studio to work in, no one is too proud to ask for help and everyone is happy to help. Everyone is striving to better themselves constantly. What more could you ask then that?

What style of work do you yourself enjoy?
I'm really enjoying dot work. I love geometric patterns and trying to work with the curves of the body.

Tell us a funny story about Dave?
Has to be our first winter of opening. Most people who have worked in a tattoo shop in the winter months will know it goes a bit quiet, especially when you have only just opened. It got to the point where we had to do something in between customers otherwise we would go insane. So we decided that Guitar Hero was the way forward. Everyone loves a bit of Guitar Hero. Me and Dave had one song on it we could not do. We must have tried it 20-30 times and still to this day have never managed it. It's not a really rock and roll story but its one of those that every time an iPod randomly chucks up the tune Barracuda, makes me have a little chuckle to myself. Long live the Guitar Heroes!

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get no enjoyment out of it so the other guys in the studio tend to take it on instead. Danny is really good at it. I always try to make sure that customers get what they want; it just might not be me that's doing it.

WHO HAVE BEEN YOUR MAIN INFLUENCES IN BOTH THE ART WORLD, AND THE TATTOO WORLD?
I am a huge fan of the Renaissance period, particularly the paintings of Raphael. When I learnt to sketch I studied DaVinci's drawings extensively and also those of the sculptor Rodin. If you want to know how to draw hands in particular there is no better source. I also like the richness contained in the works of Blake and Turner, and for a while was very influenced by the typography and illustrations of Gerald Scarfe and Ralph Steadman, who I was fortunate enough to have drawn with once.

In the tattoo world my influences change daily. The seminar DVDs produced by Joshua Carlton and Brandon Bond were both very influential to me at different stages of my career, as was a recent visit to Nikole Lowe's Good Times studio. I like the way Louis Malloy conducts himself, he's a true master craftsman, and I also like how Paul Booth has turned getting a tattoo into something far more theatrical through his Last Rites studio in New York.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR OWN TATTOOS...
Hmm, my arms have mainly been built up by the various artists that I have worked with through the years. Neither has been particularly planned out and both are a real smorgasbord of images and styles. My left arm is an oriental dragon sleeve which is partially finished and badly needs relining when I get the time, and the right contains a central image of The Gorillaz.
I have a necklace of skulls that goes across my collarbone and right around my neck that was done for me by Jin O. My left pec has a colour skull on it by Matt Hunt, and my right ribs and chest have a pattern of butterflies that Nikole Lowe tattooed for me shortly after moving into her new studio.

My other notable tattoo is a zombie pin-up on my left leg which I had done at Modern Body Art by Jo Harrison, who selflessly worked into the night on it before travelling to America a day later.

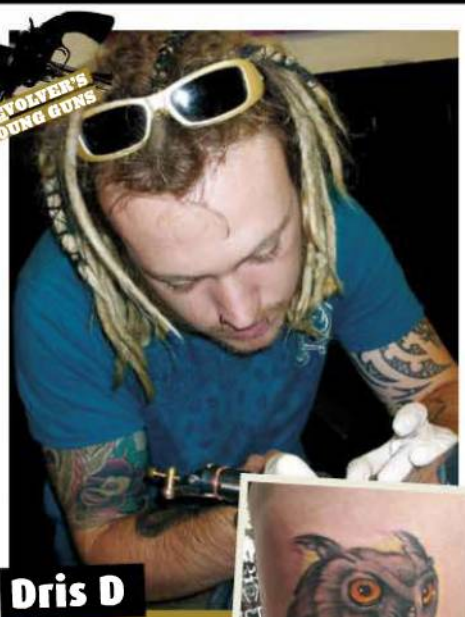
ARE THERE ANY OTHER ARTISTS THAT YOU ARE PLANNING ON GETTING WORK FROM IN THE FUTURE?
I have a definite list of tattoos I want done, it's just finding the time. I almost realised one of my long term ambitions recently when Paul Naylor agreed to do a portrait of Roy Keane for me on the outside of my right calf. We were going to do it at the Halloween Bash, but then after a number of emails between us I realised that I am actually away in the States while that is happening. Gutted.

I have also been talking to Toni Moore about doing some lettering for me above my collar bone later this year, and I'd like a Valerie Vargas gypsy head on my side. I'd also like to get a swastika from Xed at some point… the list goes on and on. So many tattoos, so many great artists… it's just finding the time, it really is.

SO ARE YOU GOOD AT BEING TATTOOED YOURSELF?
Like everybody else I love the whole experience in a strange kind of pleasure/pain way… but it hurts. There's not a tattoo on me that I didn't want to tap out of in the first ten minutes. But you get through them don't you? You have to; the pain is what makes the whole process special.

AS WELL AS RUNNING A BUSY STUDIO AND COPING WITH AN EVER GROWING WAITING LIST, YOU HAVE ALSO JUST AGREED TO TAKE OVER THE REINS OF TATTOO MASTER, THE INDUSTRY'S LEADING TRADE MAGAZINE? ARE YOU MAD?
Well… maybe. But opportunities like that don't along every day. The publishers offered me 100% editorial control and after discussing it with the rest of the team at my studio I accepted. It is going to be the beginning of a very exciting new chapter for me. A lot of extra work, but hopefully it will be worth it. Hopefully I'll be able to give this industry a magazine they can be proud of.

REVOLVER'S YOUNG GUNS



Dris D

How long have you been working at Revolver?
I have been working at Revolver for just over a year now.

How did you end up at the studio?
I had just come back from Australia, and I wanted to hang out with some like-minded people, so I emailed Dave, and he invited me down to his studio to hang out. Straight away I got on with everybody and got a really good feeling about the studio's vibe, and it just went on from there I guess.

What style of work do you yourself enjoy?
I enjoy most styles of tattooing apart from tribal and script. I really love doing black and grey realism, and I'm just starting to move onto more complex colour work which is really exciting for me as it is pushing me harder, and helping me develop more as an all round artist.

Tell us a funny story about Dave?
Ha, ha! The most memorable story of many is one of our staff outings. We all went out, and to cut a long story short, had lots to drink and managed to lose Dave. Now we all assumed that he had retired for the night, however in the next few days we found out that this was not the case. He had actually gone on to a strip club (without me which I wasn't happy about!) got a lot more drunk, gone for a dance with a girl and ended up crashing through a table. Poor, poor strippers...

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WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE, WHERE DO YOU PERSONALLY SEE THE TATTOO INDUSTRY GOING IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS?

I have a personal theory about the growth of the tattoo industry, and that is that everything is going to become more and more about the 'experience', than it is about the tattoo. It is going to be more about having a tattoo done by a big name artist, than just having the best tattoo you can get.

For example, if you want a picture of some sunflowers there is probably an excellent artist in your local area that could do you a superb sunflower watercolour for around forty quid. However, if you want the kudos of owning what would be perceived as the ultimate sunflower image then you would need to pay out tens of millions for a Van Gogh painting. Now, the Van Gogh may not be in reality be anywhere near as good an actual likeness of the sunflowers but my god, everybody would be envious! And I think that is the way that the tattoo industry is moving. I see people at conventions showing off their tattoos and going, 'Yeah, it's a Phil Kyle' or going up to people and saying 'Is that a Bob Tyrrel?' The name of the artist that created tattoo has almost become as big a factor for many people as the tattoo itself.

To this end the whole celebrity artist thing is going to continue to become more and more of a selling point, and if you are not a celebrity artist then maybe you can have a unique studio instead that gets people talking. There's going to become a little bit more 'show business' in how things are done over the next decade, you watch. It's going to be a very exciting time for us all.

HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK THE EVER INCREASING MEDIA INVOLVEMENT IS TO THE INDUSTRY'S GROWTH?

Love it or hate it, the recent media interest in the tattoo world has certainly helped line a lot of people's pockets in this industry. It has definitely grown the market beyond our wildest dreams and I genuinely think that as a result, from a business point of view, things have never been so good.

However, the downside is that the TV shows etc. make tattooing look so cool and so easy that everybody and their dog seems to be buying a DIY tattoo kit these days, or has a son or daughter that wants to be a tattoo artist without any idea of what is really involved. Recently there has been a lot of negative talk about people 'cashing in' on this industry, but at the end of the day that was always going to happen sooner or later. We couldn't keep it all 'our little secret' forever. It's far too interesting for that. We have to protect tattooing so that it can maintain its integrity, but between the TV shows, the internet sites, the DVD seminars that many artists themselves now produce, it has become impossible to regulate as strictly as it used to be.

As artists we have to learn to play the game, make sure our work is seen and let the public make their own choices. Cream always rises to the top.

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNET?

Once again there are pros and cons with the internet. It has certainly opened lines of communication between the artists themselves, which can only be good for the art form as a whole. Certainly the social networking sites are a great way to meet new customers and introduce them to your work. The downside however, is that it has become far too easy to get hold of the tattoo equipment and if this isn't stopped soon then people are going to get hurt.

WAKING UP EVERYDAY WITH A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING TO WORK. I THINK BEING ABLE TO DO SOMETHING YOU LOVE FOR A LIVING IS PRETTY CLOSE TO FINDING THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS IN LIFE.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A TATTOO ARTIST?

Waking up everyday with a smile on your face and looking forward to going to work. I think being able to do something you love for a living is pretty close to finding the secret of happiness in life. So many hours of your life are spent working; I just thank the stars that I spend mine happily and creatively and hopefully making other people happy into the bargain.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD SAY YOU PARTICULARLY DISLIKE ABOUT THE JOB?

I lose patience pretty quickly with people who try to haggle over the price of a tattoo, or artists who wear their longevity as some kind of badge, no matter what the quality of their work. I don't think doing any job longer than someone else necessarily makes you any better at it than them. More experienced yes, but a guy that has been tattooing for 15 years is not necessarily going to put a better tattoo on you than say Nikko Hurtado, who has only tattooing for a fraction of the time. True talent does not come with a timeline.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT TATTOOING?

Watch football, play skittles, spend time with the family, walk the dogs… oh and write for magazines!

FINALLY, TELL US A FUNNY ANECDOTE...

The other day I was sat talking to a customer in our reception who was waiting for her friend to be pierced. Predictably the conversation moved on to the subject of tattoos and I asked her if she herself had any? Removing her shoe she said that she had one on her foot and that I had done it for her three years ago. Then hesitating, she looked me up and down and said, "Well, I think it was you… have you moved your tattoos about?"
Yes, she was blonde.

DAVE IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE...

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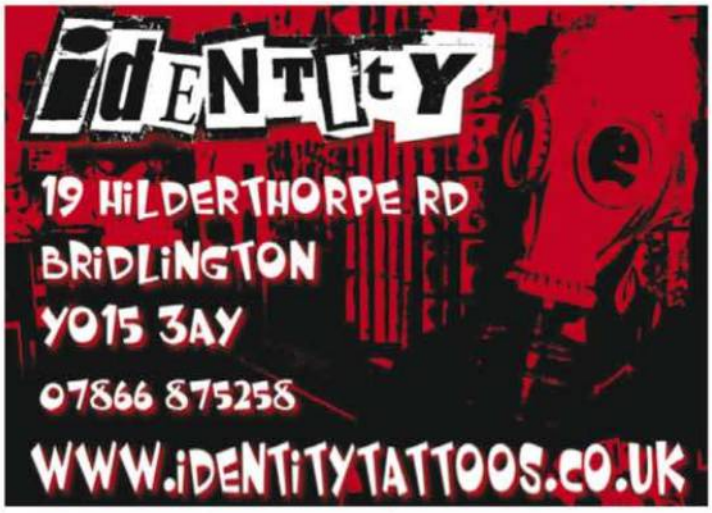

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MISS ARIANNA

TWISTING TRADITIONAL

To take a traditional image and update it with a bolder colour scheme is haute couture amongst so many artists, but Miss Arianna breathes individuality into each of her creations that sets them apart.

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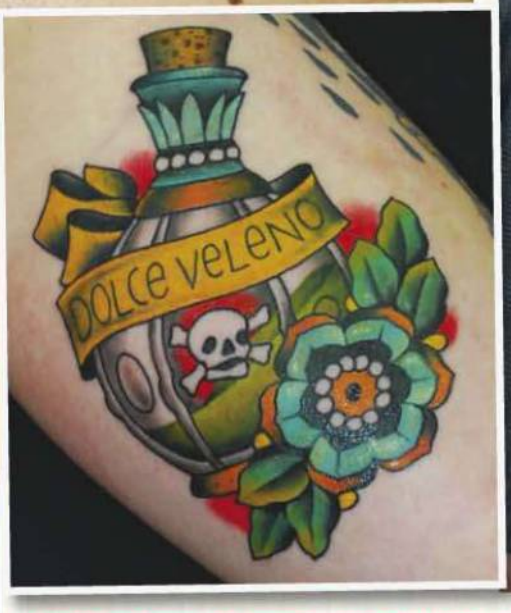

SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN VERY ACCURATE, SO EVEN MY FIRST WORKS HAD A VERY CLEAN CUT LOOK, AND THEN TIME, EXERCISE AND MY WILL TO IMPROVE HAVE MADE THE REST...

She twists the structure of time-honoured motifs and forges them into flights of fancy that encompass whimsical and leftfield concepts with a timeless appearance that is afforded by her use of Americana-infused sentiments. Her home in Rimini, on Italy's glorious Adriatic Coast, is the scene of both her education in the art of tattoo and her base of operations at Skinwear Tattoo Shop. We'll let the lady herself talk through her career thus far...

About 10 years ago, in Rimini, there were a fair number of tattooists, but none of them were looking for a trainee. Only my regular tattooist, who eventually became my 'maestro', noticed my constancy and my true involvement in this activity, and after about a year he took me in his studio as an apprentice. It has surely been a fundamental experience, and there I realised it would be my profession, especially in the toughest moment of the apprenticeship. I remember that tattoos weren't as popular as they are now, and an apprentice had to work a lot of hours during the day (especially in the summer), and earned very little, or even nothing sometimes, and for 2 years I never even touched a tattoo machine.

I had my first tattoo at 18, from a nearby tattooist. It was supposed to be a sun with Celtic knots, but as the man was in a hurry for a dinner that night, he made it too quickly, and it's actually more a black spot on my arm... ➲

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I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT APPRENTICESHIP IS THE BEST WAY TO BECOME AN ALL-ROUND TATTOOIST

I had my apprenticeship in one of the first tattooists in Rimini. For more than two years, I cleaned the studio, sterilised the working equipment, set the needles, welcomed the customers at the reception and made tonnes of handmade stencils without ever touching the tattoo machine. During the day, I kept on looking and looking at the tattooist at work, trying to learn as much as I could.

After the apprenticeship, I worked for another studio for two and a half years, in which I used to manage the whole studio and the other tattooists' work that were there for the summer. The start of my career was very hard; to me, tattooing is quite demanding even now. Since the very beginning, I've always been very accurate, so even my first works had a very clean cut look, and then time, exercise and my will to improve have made the rest and I can really say that all that brought me where I am now, but I am very down-to-earth.

I strongly believe that apprenticeship is the best way to become an all-round tattooist, able to do any kind of tattoo without difficulty, but things are so different nowadays. It's hard to find reliable people that really want to learn this profession with patience and humility.

The style I love to perform is my personal version of traditional. I like it because it's similar to me; it's direct, clear and solid. It has a unique strength and balance. I deeply admire big names such as Sailor Jerry, Bert Grimm, Percy Waters, etc, but I think it's so limiting to use their flash and only employ the colours of that period. I don't like to reshape their flash and put my name on it, as though they were my drawings. I respect those who do it, but I think that working out my own drawings is definitely more interesting, perceiving what my customer wants, and then perform it in my personal traditional style: solid line, tonnes of black, and full colours.

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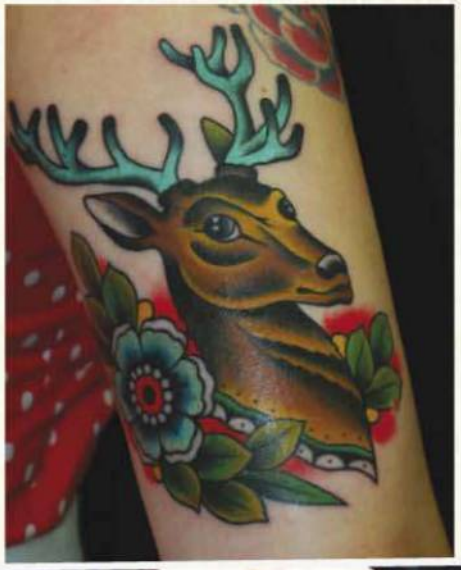

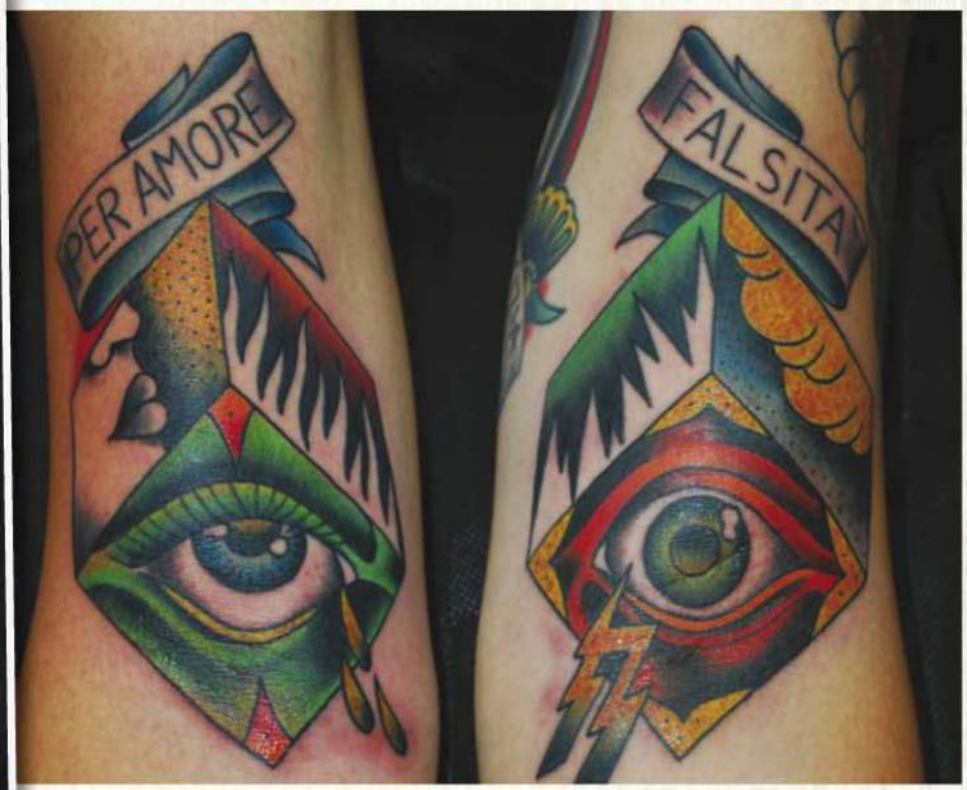

I always have a strong concept in my mind when I start a tattoo: a deep respect for the customer, and for myself. Anyway, I don't put my ego in front of everything, there are always the flash racks. I always try to understand properly what the customer wants so that I can do the best subject for them. I'm very exigent with myself, and prior to the final drawing, I do many trial runs.

Compared to when I began, things have changed quickly. Looking at magazines from just 4 or 5 years ago, I noticed impressive improvements in technical execution. The tattoo 'industry' (such a bad word) runs fast. Tattoos are not only related to a category as it was some time ago, and it's not seen as it was some time ago. Unfortunately, as with many other things, mass exposure has brought bad facets: everybody wants a tattoo, and everybody wants to be a tattooist, qualitatively dumbing down the tattoo scene. Unfortunately, even some conventions are conforming to this negative trend in my honest opinion: I've actually worked side by side with people who I really can't define as professional.

I'm a very grateful person, so I never forget to thank those who advise and help me in any way. The people who really supported me since the very beginning are my parents, my dearest friends and my boyfriend and work-partner, Andrea. I want to thank all the people that every week move themselves from Italy and abroad to Rimini to reach me, then leave with a piece of mine on their skin.

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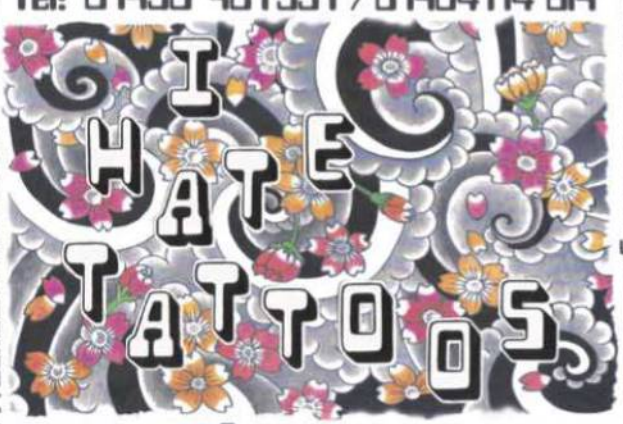

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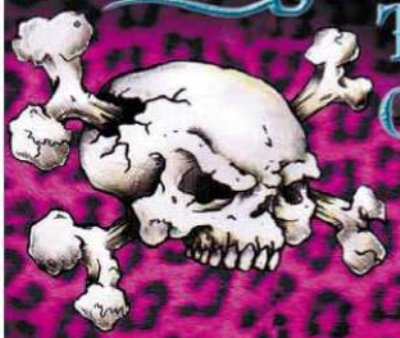

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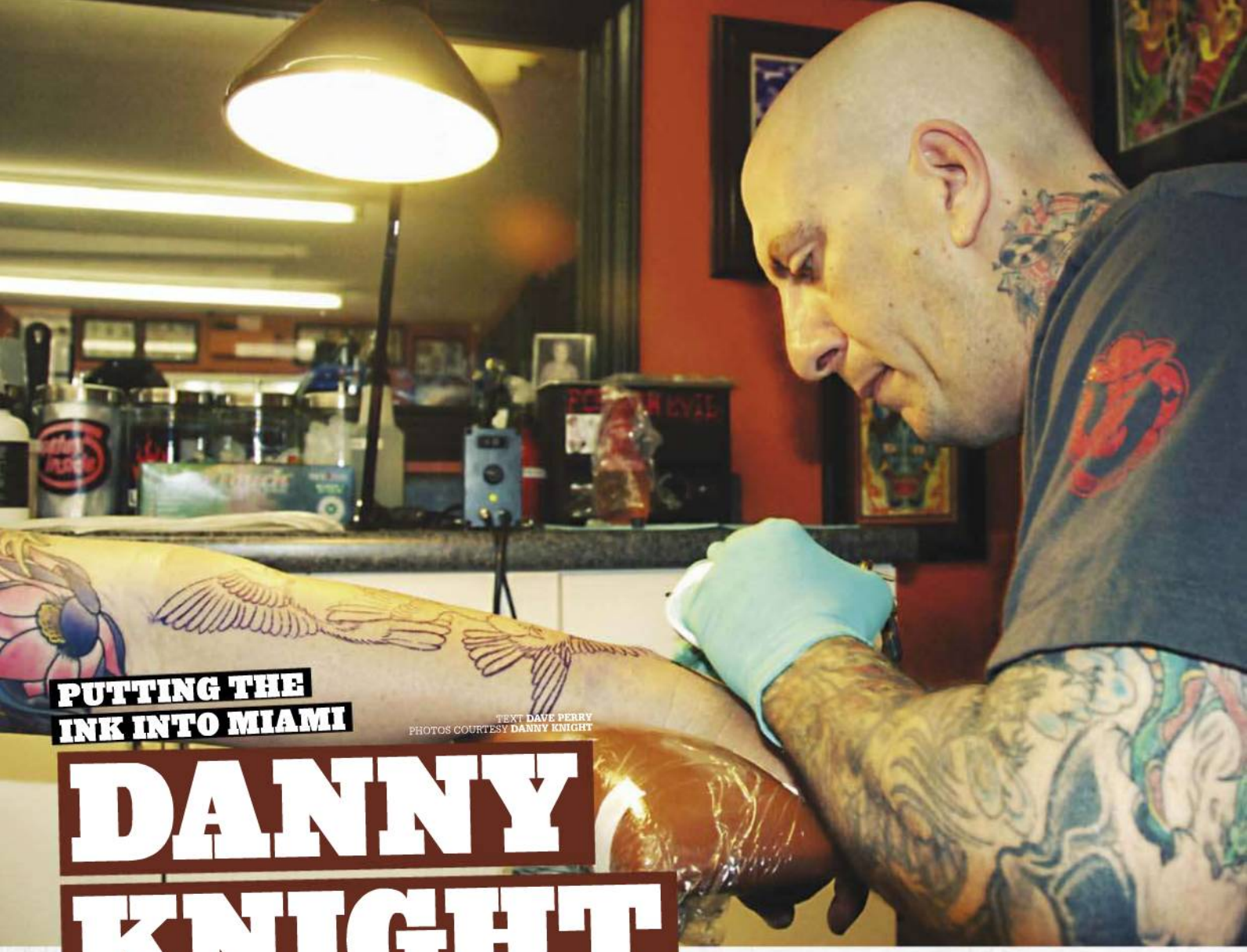

PUTTING THE INK INTO MIAMI

DANNY KNIGHT

TEXT DAVE PERRY
PHOTOS COURTESY DANNY KNIGHT

Danny Knight was receiving international acclaim in the tattoo industry, long before his South Coast buddies Ami James and Chris Nunez put tattooing on the television map. In a career that began in 1989 and has spanned over 20 years, moving from New York to Vegas, from Vegas to Florida

Danny Knight has worked hard to hone not only his distinctively clean traditional tattoo style, but also to create some of the finest tattoo machines available on the market today. In fact, look closely at the guys working on Miami Ink and you'll notice that more often than not those are his machines being regularly used to produce the tattoos that helped send this business of ours into commercial overdrive.

I was lucky enough to catch up with Danny in March, just a month and a half away from the opening date of his Orlando convention, and talk machines, tattooing and of course… Miami Ink…

JUST WHO IS DANNY KNIGHT?
Husband, Father, Tattooer, Machine Builder, all around good guy.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR TATTOO CAREER TO DATE. HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE INDUSTRY?
I had a real interest in Tattooing at a young age. I started hanging around "shops" back when tattooing was still underground in New York in the late '80s. I hung out long enough until I got put to work sweeping floors and it just evolved from there. After I left New York and came back to Florida, I began working at Tattoos by Lou. I made some amazing friendships and learned insurmountable knowledge from some of the finest artists South Florida had to offer. After a few years I moved to Ft Lauderdale and opened Rock-a-Billy Tattoos with my brother. We sold it a few years later and I moved to Vegas. We stayed there for a few years before coming back to Florida and settling in Orlando. That is when I opened Cast Iron Tattoos, 8 years ago. I am not a big fan of snow, so coming to Orlando was perfect for me.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR TIME IS SPLIT BETWEEN TATTOOING AND MACHINE BUILDING THESE DAYS?
Because my tattoo shop is connected to my machine shop, I just work according to what that day requires of me. I have the convenience

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Cast Iron Tattoos
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Orlando Fl 32806
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Shop and appointment Info
www.castirontattoos.com

Tried and True Tattoo Expo Info
www.triedandtruetattooexpo.com

THERE IS NO RESPECTED TATTOO ARTIST THAT USES ONLY ONE KIND OF MACHINE. ANY GOOD ARTIST WILL HAVE MULTIPLE MACHINES.

of having both my Tattoo shop and machine shop in the same building. Luckily for me the building right behind me is a full service machine shop, they allow me to use whatever I need.

My time really gets split between taking my youngest son to ride motocross, watching my youngest daughter do gymnastics, and whatever my wife plans for me. I think I have found the perfect balance between family and work.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST BEGIN MAKING YOUR OWN MACHINES?
I began building Machines in 1998 in Las Vegas. I wanted to see if I could.
What started out as a hobby, turned into a second career, which I am very grateful for. It allows me to give back to the industry that I care so much about.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST MACHINE YOU BUILT? HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE?
The prototype that I built did not go so well. In all my trials and errors, I made the prototype out of stainless steel. The conductivity was not good. So instead of making a yoke, I gave it to my wife and started all over again.

DO YOU STILL HAVE IT?
My wife has it, and will not give it back.

A FEW MONTHS BACK AND WAS WATCHING A DVD OF THE FIRST SEASON OF MIAMI INK, AND I NOTICED THAT NEARLY ALL THE ARTISTS IN THE SHOP WERE USING YOUR MACHINES. NOW I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALSO BASED IN FLORIDA, BUT IS THERE A STORY BEHIND THAT?
We all had worked at Tattoos by Lou at one point over the years, but I worked directly with Chris and Ami. We have remained close over the years. We were all at a convention a couple months before the show began, the guys bought the machines from me and loved them enough to use them through most of Miami Ink series, which I am very grateful for.

IN LATER EPISODES DAN DRINGENBERG'S MACHINES BECAME MORE WIDELY USED... WHY DO YOU THINK THAT WAS?
There is no respected tattoo artist that uses only one kind of machine. Any good artist will have multiple machines. Dan was fortunate to be a part of Miami Ink in later episodes and he builds a really nice machine and is among the top machine builders.

DID YOU EVER VISIT THE GUYS ON THE SHOW?
From time to time on a personal level to spend time with my old friends.

EVER GET ASKED TO GO IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS?
There was going to be a segment with Chris Nunez, where my cousin was getting tattooed. I was going to come on and discuss my machines, since Chris was using them. But the hurricane season messed up the schedule, so I was unable to participate.

IN THE UK THERE IS A LOT OF CONFUSION OVER WHAT HAPPENS TO THE GUYS AT MIAMI INK WHEN THE CAMERAS STOP ROLLING. PEOPLE HAVE VISITED THE STUDIO ON HOLIDAY AND THEY DO NOT TATTOO OUT OF THERE. AS A FRIEND OF THEIRS, CAN YOU SHED SOME LIGHT ON WHERE CHRIS AND AMI TATTOO WHEN THEY ARE NOT ON SCREEN?
Miami Ink is a brand name owned by the Discovery Channel. Chris and Ami own a shop a few doors down from the Miami Ink location called Love/Hate Tattoo. When they are not filming that is where they work.

HOW DO YOU THINK SHOWS LIKE MIAMI INK HAVE AFFECTED OUR BUSINESS?
There are pro's and con's. The upside is that show opened up a whole new perspective to the general public and made tattoos more acceptable. The downside is that now everyone thinks that they can be a tattoo shop owner, because it is trendy and profitable, and not because they have a love for tattooing!➲

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IS THERE ANYONE YOU'D STILL LIKE TO MEET?
I am very approachable. I have a strong belief that once you think you have all of tattooing figured out, it's time to quit. There are always things to learn and good friends to be made.

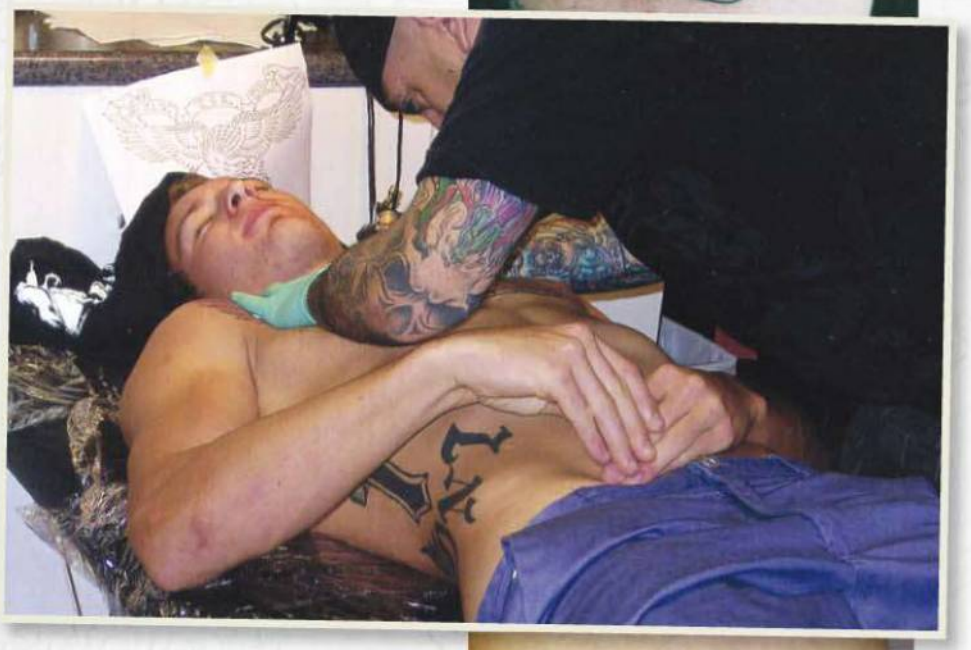
GO ON... NAME DROP. WHO'S THE MOST FAMOUS PERSON YOU'VE TATTOOED?
I am not a huge sports fan so I was not sure who they were until someone else told me, but I have tattooed a few of the Miami Dolphins, and a few of the Miami Heat players. I tattooed boxer Razor Ruddick, Wrestler Rey Mysterio Jr, and Motocross stars, Matt Boni and Sarah Whitmore. As I said earlier, I really try to be approachable and available to anyone who walks into my shop.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU YOURSELF WERE TATTOOED?
The last tattoo I got was a number 10 to celebrate me and my wife's 10 year wedding anniversary.

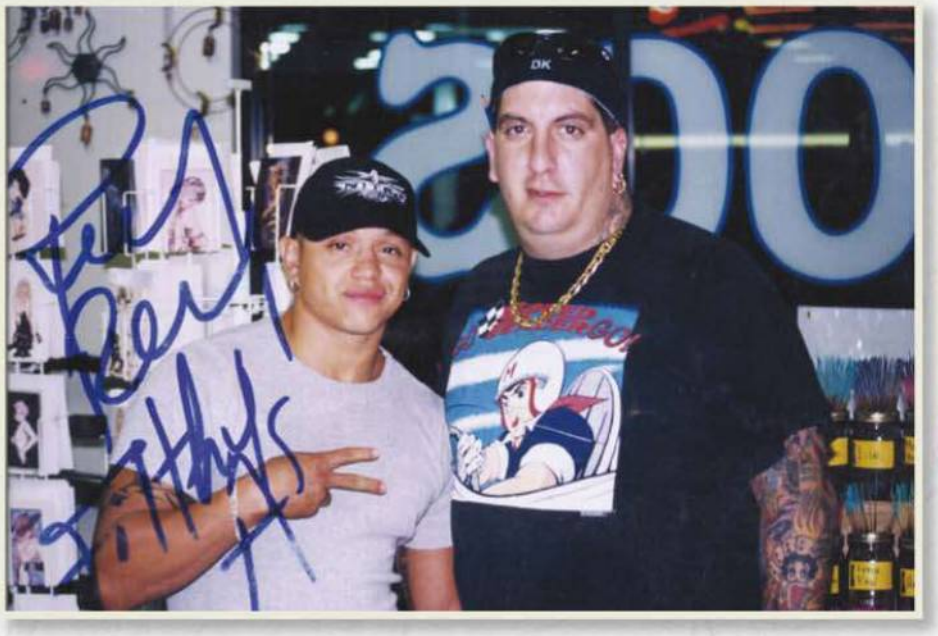
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OWN TATTOO STYLE?
I like to do mostly Traditional American and Japanese styles, but I like all styles of tattooing. I even do tribal on a weekly basis. I am just happy that I am not doing manual labour for a living.

SO HOW DOES YOUR AVERAGE WORKING DAY PAN OUT?
Hopefully with money in my pocket! It really depends on time of the year, between spending time watching my youngest son ride his dirt bike, my youngest daughter doing Gymnastics, playing with our 3 dogs, doing the convention, building machines, tattooing, and travelling, I have a pretty full plate, but luckily I have an amazing wife who keeps me on a schedule and makes sure that I am able to accomplish all of the things on my plate with relative ease.

AND ON TOP OF ALL OF THAT YOU ALSO HAVE YOUR OWN CONVENTION TO RUN. TELL ME ABOUT THE TRIED AND TRUE TATTOO EXPO (WWW.TRIEDANDTRUETATTOOEXPO.COM). I'D IMAGINE YOU ARE PRETTY PROUD OF IT.
Extremely proud! Lately there has been an influx of promoters holding 5-10 shows a year! They do not care about the industry, only about their pockets. We wanted to bring a higher standard of show by having people actually in this industry putting on a show



I HAVE A PRETTY FULL PLATE, BUT LUCKILY I HAVE AN AMAZING WIFE WHO KEEPS ME ON A SCHEDULE AND MAKES SURE THAT I AM ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THE THINGS ON MY PLATE WITH RELATIVE EASE.



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for the Artists, vendors, and guests to enjoy equally! We want the public to be exposed to a genuine tattoo experience, like shows used to be years ago. People would be excited for months, and talk about it for months after! We wanted to bring that to Orlando.

AND THIS SHOULD BE EVEN BETTER NOW YOU'VE MOVED IT AWAY FROM HURRICANE SEASON EH?
We believe so! We took it out of Hurricane season and into tax season. It's a better time financially and much better weather! This way people could bring their families, enjoy the show and enjoy all the attractions that Orlando has to offer.

WHAT OTHER CONVENTIONS DO YOU LIKE TO ATTEND?
I like to attend a few shows in the states to see friends that I don't always get to see. I have been doing a little traveling abroad and I really enjoy it. I really like learning about different techniques and traditions. I haven't gotten to do much overseas yet but I look forward traveling more and getting to meet some other amazing artists from all over the world.

AND I HEAR YOU WERE ALSO RECENTLY SELECTED TO BE A BOARD MEMBER OF THE FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL TATTOO ARTIST GUILD.
I decided to get involved in the guild to help my industry with some upcoming laws that affect the tattoo community in my state.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR BUSINESS MOVING IN THE FUTURE? WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

I WILL BE PROUD OF WHATEVER HE CHOOSES TO DO, AS I AM PROUD OF ALL OF MY CHILDREN, BUT AT THIS POINT HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO SHOWS A STRONG INTEREST IN TATTOOING.

We are in the process of expanding the shop and working on some new machine ideas, we are also getting ready for the upcoming convention and I have some plans to travel this year.

I KNOW YOUR SON IS VERY INTO DIRT TRACK RACING, BUT DO YOU SEE HIM ONE DAY FOLLOWING IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND GOING INTO THE PROFESSION?
He loves riding his bike, and he already shows a heavy amount of interest in tattooing. I want him to do what makes him happy. I will be proud of whatever he chooses to do, as I am proud of all of my children, but at this point he is the only one who shows a strong interest in tattooing.

OKAY, IN WINDING UP... TELL ME A FUNNY TATTOO ANECDOTE...
I guess I'll tell you about the first time I met Jerry Rigger. I was attending one of his machine tuning seminars quite a few years back, and at this point we had never met. He was telling the class about my machine, stating it was the nicest he had seen in years, and it was from a kid he had never met "D Knight". He had no idea I was in the class. At the end of the seminar, I went up and introduced myself and thanked him for the kind words. We have been friends ever since.

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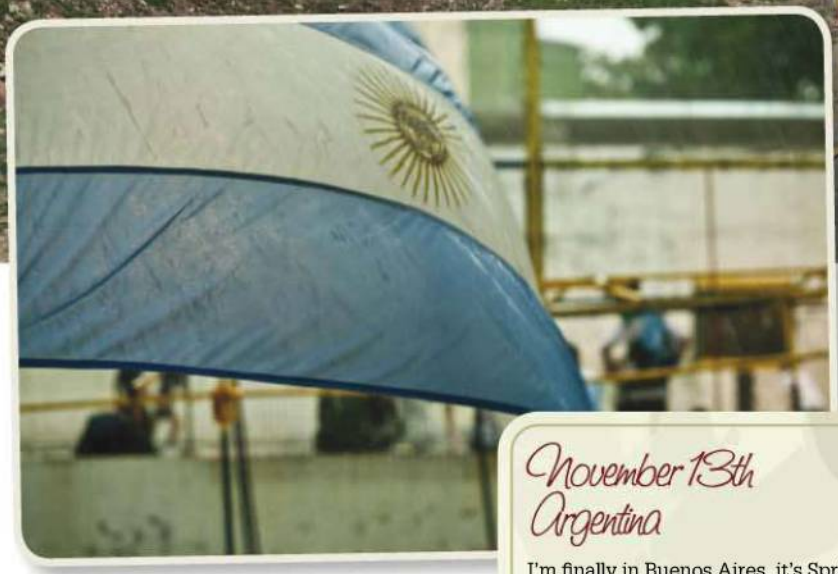
TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY P-MOD
WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/P-MOD
TRANSLATION CHLOE DEVOUGE

LATIN AMERICAN

TATTOO TRIP

Some regions of the world are so culturally devious that we feel the need to linger there for a moment; South America is one of them. I spent 21 days in the southern-part of the American continent and this trip of mine was full of unexpected happenings, both professionally and personally.



November 10th, Paris: I'm leaving in a rush for Buenos Aires, my suitcase contents comes down to a few clothes, my photography equipment and a road book, which is a very worn and dog-eared Lonely Planet guide of my chosen destination. It's of course very difficult to get ready for a trip on a continent you've never been to but there are a few elements that I have found in the past few days that make sense and make me think that although I don't have many contacts, the ones I have are the right ones, so I am off!

November 13th Argentina

I'm finally in Buenos Aires, it's Spring time here and is a long way away from the grey skies of France. Unlike some of my other trips, I hardly feel the jet lag and I guess it's because my attention is focused on the sights and sounds surrounding me. It seems that each street is a new stage, a new scene meant to amaze and please me. Even if I haven't started writing my report on tattoos yet, I have the feeling that this experience is going to be incredible, what with all these characters that seem to come straight out of fiction.

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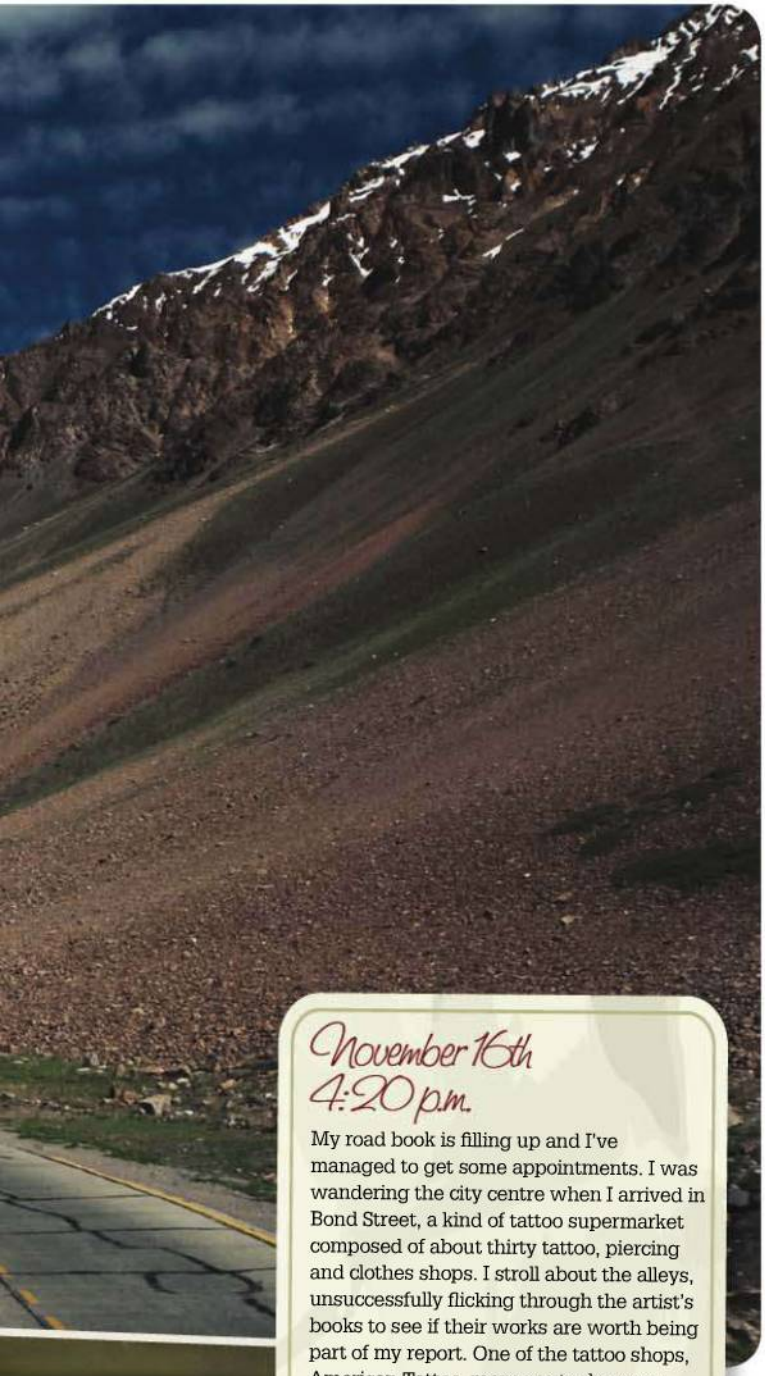

November 16th 4:20 p.m.

My road book is filling up and I've managed to get some appointments. I was wandering the city centre when I arrived in Bond Street, a kind of tattoo supermarket composed of about thirty tattoo, piercing and clothes shops. I stroll about the alleys, unsuccessfully flicking through the artist's books to see if their works are worth being part of my report. One of the tattoo shops, American Tattoo, manages to draw my attention thanks to a great concept and a great interior design, which are as good as those of chain stores. Twelve tattoo artists work in the two tattoo shops owned by American Tattoo, mainly in a US and realistic style. The shop window is covered with pictures of local stars that have been tattooed here, you get the picture. After having bargained with two go-betweens, I finally get to meet Mariano Antonio who

definitely looks like a rock star manager who has just escaped from Spinal Tap. The atmosphere in his office is peculiar, there are animal pelts on both the walls and the floor and some Flying V guitars signed by the most famous members of a New Wave of British Heavy Metal band are hanging on the walls. It seems that this place is ruled more by marketing than by the passion of tattooing. I've had a productive day but I'm still eager to learn more about tattooing in this area of the world.➲

WELLDONE TATTOOS

"I feel very lucky to be part of one of the best Argentinean teams". The words of Mariano Castiglioni, the current boss of Welldone sounds reliable but the portfolios of the studio artists confirm it. "I discovered the Japanese style twenty years ago in Body Suits, one of the first shops of this area. I had never seen that style and was really impressed", he says. After that Mariano spent a few years in Rising Dragon, in New York and in Madrid in Tattoo Magic before returning home and opening Welldone in 2005. He takes his first apprentice, Jair alias Dominguez Dubois, under his wing and the latter starts developing a style that he himself describes as influenced by child-like illustrations: "I'm fond of illustrations with a lot of black and just a few colours that produce a real and quick impact". And his tattoos definitely produce such an impact even if he's only started practicing a few years ago. His experience as an illustrator shows through in his work. Juan alias xPiranahx joins the...

XPIRANAHX WELLDONE, BUENOS-AIRES

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XPIRANAHX WELLDONE, BUENOS-AIRES

...team in 2007 to complete the staff of one of the most well known shops in South America. He comes from a family of artists and quickly realised he was interested in drawing thanks to comics and gore illustrations: "I draw compulsively and all the time to distract myself from the world around me". He's definitely a very sensitive and discreet guy but his very colourful and asserted style is already pretty astonishing. His talent didn't go unnoticed and Mariano is the one who almost forced him to use a tattoo machine: "my partners and mentors have made me understand what tattooing really is, moreover, working in a big town allows me to be in close contact with a whole lot of tattoo artists and customers. In the past few years, Buenos Aires has been flooded with passionate people creating a new impulse in the city." There's no doubt about the fact that Juan is part of that new generation. This team which shares a number of influences (Filip Leu, Bert Grim, Chad Koeplinger, Percy Waters etc.) seems to be working out pretty well and wouldn't change a thing, they're definitely right about that.

November 18th 11:00 a.m.

I'm heading towards Palermo, in the Northern part of Buenos Aires. I'm really looking forward to meeting the protagonists of Well Done Tattoos (read the interview below) and I can see that I'm not going to be disappointed. It's one of these shops were you immediately feel at home, it has nothing to do with the "bling-bling" shop I've been to two days previous. The tattoo area is a well-organized mess, just like the whole city really. I watch Mariano Castiglioni while he's working and there's no doubt that this man knows what he's doing. His sidekicks, Dominguez Dumois and Xpiranahx are not bad either. People often say that a photograph is only good when it shows the personality and the sensibility of its author, if it's the same for tattoos, then these three guys are excellent: their portfolios abound with wonderful tattoos and illustrations. The American artist, Marcus Kuhn (Just Good Tattoos, Santa Barbara, USA) who is also present as a guest for two-weeks stay and speaks French with a strong Yankee accent, who tells me about the main differences between customers from the USA, South America, Japan and Europe.

CARLA & MONK

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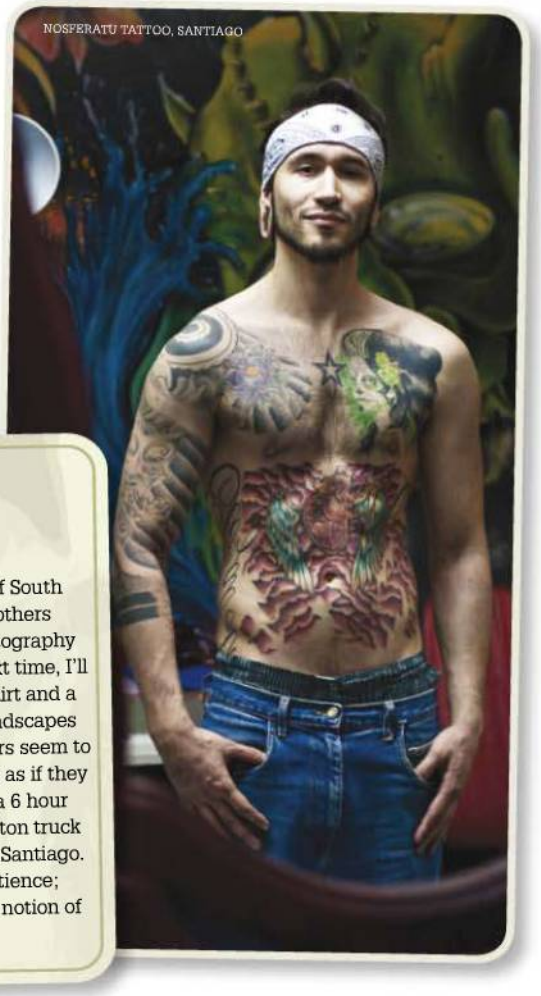

NOSFERATU TATTOO, SANTIAGO

November 19th
7:12 p.m.

I'm leaving for the Western part of South America. The Chilean Customs bothers me with questions about my photography equipment and my stay here. Next time, I'll make sure to wear a Hawaiian Shirt and a flashy bum bag! In the surreal landscapes of the Andean Range, truck drivers seem to be driving their monstrous trucks as if they are riding motor scooters, hence a 6 hour stopover due to the crash of a 33-ton truck blocking the only road leading to Santiago. A Californian tourist loses her patience; she'll learn soon enough that the notion of time is quite different here.➲

MARIANO CASTIGLIONI, WELLDONE, BUENOS AIRES

In the surreal landscapes of the Andean Range, truck drivers seem to be driving their monstrous trucks as if they are riding motor scooters, hence a 6 hour stopover due to the crash of a 33-ton truck blocking the only road leading to Santiago.

AMOR, REAL SANTIAGO

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November 21st
11:00 a.m.

First day of a 5 day stay. In the city centre of Santiago, I find another tattoo supermarket similar to the one I've been to in Buenos Aires. This place is smaller though and the production is far better than in Bond Street, Argentina. The few magazines I have left are passed around; the atmosphere is quite friendly between the different tattoo shops. The most interesting works are from Inferno Tatuajes in a dark and realistic style and the colourful, New School tattoos of Leo Rojas and Georgi Abusleme (Amor Real).

The weekend ends up in a remote squat where a series of shootings is scheduled to take place. The place is dusty and it's creating a sharp contrast with the warm and golden light of the outside as the day ends. I'm not really amazed by the tattoos here but people still have such amazing faces! We have the feeling that people are ok with us being here but that we won't be able too stay much longer.

On my last day here, I meet Nico Acosta (read the interview opposite). There's no shop window here, people don't go to Better Days out of sheer accident. The tattoo community is rather small in Europe and it seems that it's just the same here: Nico has spent some time working at Welldone Tattoos and with Nishinja Das, two other great tattoo artists in South America- before he opened Better Days. The walls are covered with hundreds of sheets of tattoo flash and Nico has clearly been in favour of the straight edge culture for years now. The mostly Old School style of Nico and his partner Gabriel Toz is simple and understated but of a great quality.

A few blocks away from the squat, I get to meet Nishinja (see the interview on the next page) a major figure over here. I quickly take a few pictures of him in his own shop. Being here feels like being in a sanctuary of the Japanese style, which still is a must for many people.➲

LEANDRO CURI, AMERICAN TATTOO

LEANDRO CURI, AMERICAN TATTOO

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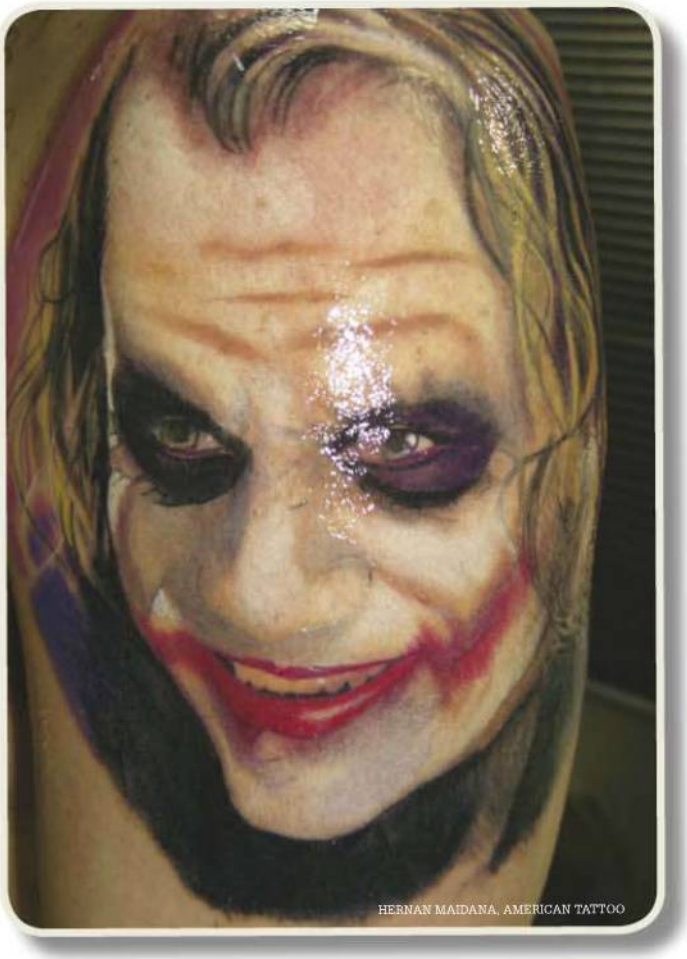
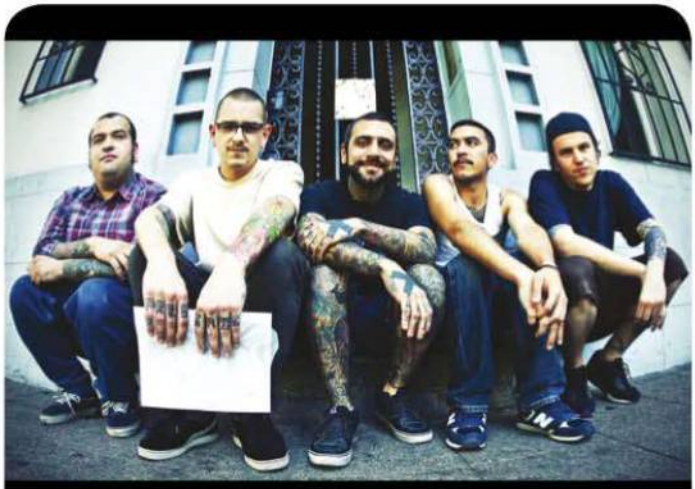


HERNAN MAIDANA, AMERICAN TATTOO



NICO ACOSTA BETTER DAYS TATTOO

I started hanging out in tattoo shops out of curiosity since I was about eleven years old". Nico Acosta has been travelling around quite a lot: Mexico, L.A. and a road trip full of encounters with tattooists such as Bugs (Evil from the Needle) in London before he settled down and opened Better Days in Santiago, where Nishinja Das helped him get started. "I also owe the Welldone team who made me discover a type and a style of tattoo that I now practice." This former Japanese-style enthusiast is now getting more focused on a traditional US style because of "its strong and timeless aspect". He shares Nishinja's opinion that the tattooing community is still young here but will be considered as a one of high values soon enough. His enthusiasm his definitely contagious!

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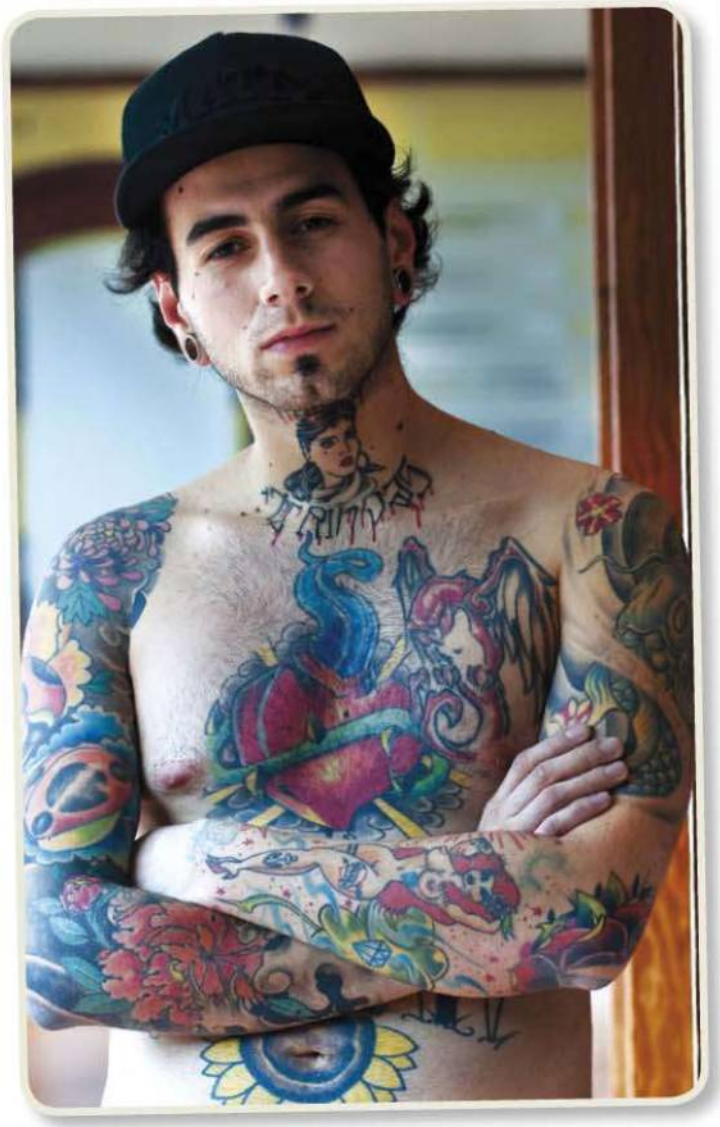

NICO ACOSTA, SANTIAGO

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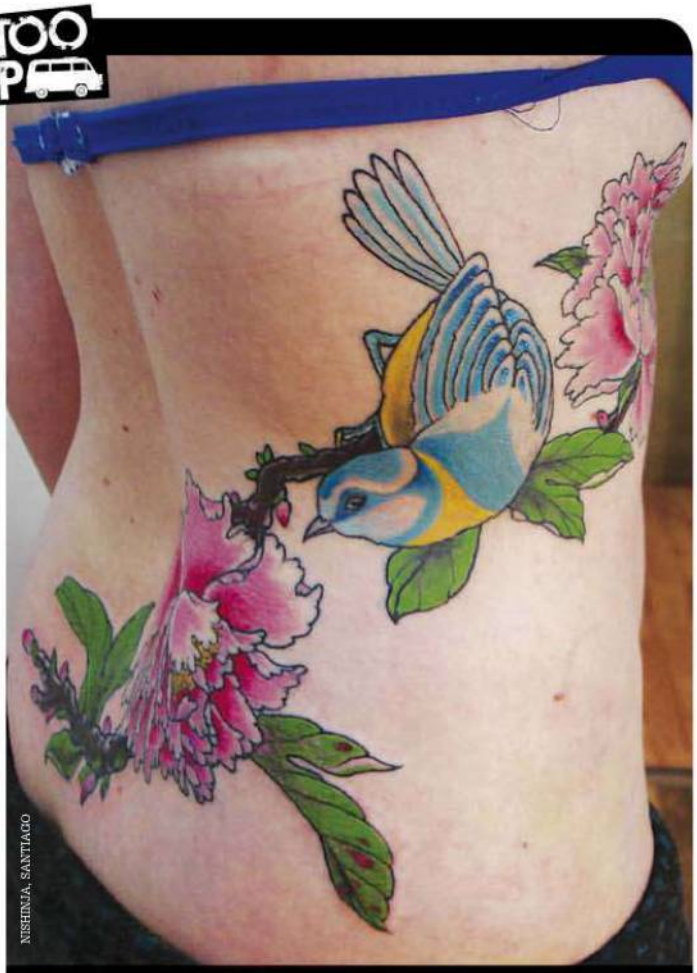
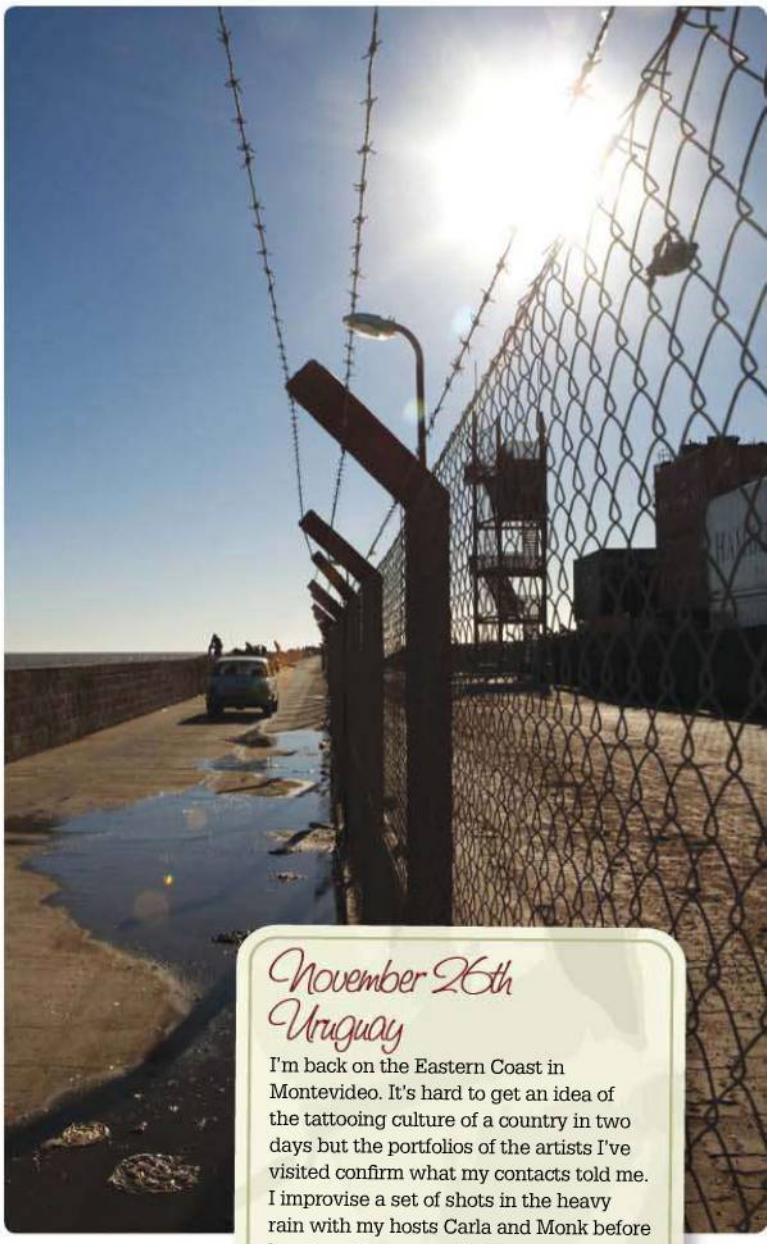


NISHINJA, SANTIAGO

NISHINJA

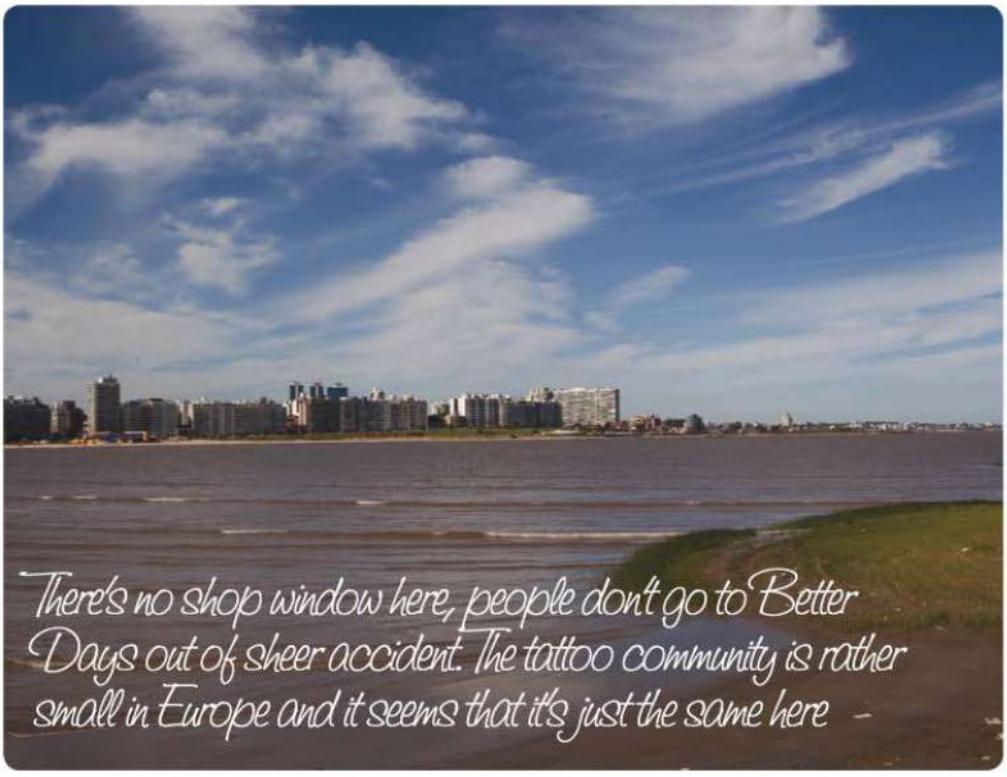
Few tattoo artists have successfully managed to tattoo in an elegant and traditional Japanese style in Chile. Nishinja is undoubtedly the major figure of the Japanese style here, thanks to his style and years of practice. His vocation to become a tattoo artist appeared when he was fifteen and he has learned how to compose and how to use bright colours year after year being influenced by artists such as Filip Leu, Mauricio Teodoro or Jondix Junior. According to him, the tattooing community in Santiago is still too young and it's a shame that so few great artists come here.



November 26th Uruguay

I'm back on the Eastern Coast in Montevideo. It's hard to get an idea of the tattooing culture of a country in two days but the portfolios of the artists I've visited confirm what my contacts told me. I improvise a set of shots in the heavy rain with my hosts Carla and Monk before leaving, all too soon, for Europe.

This few weeks in South America show that there's an interesting potential here and that tattooing is getting more and more widespread, especially in Chile, where the phenomenon seems to be quite recent and popular amongst the South American society, at least in the towns and their suburbs. Just like in Europe, the new generation of tattoo artist is creating a new visual identity but is still influenced by its elders in a mostly North American and Japanese style. The customers are looking for high quality tattoos and tattooing is more mainstream, even if there are fewer big tattoo studios here. It's also interesting to see that tattoo artists almost always speak about their fellow artists in the interviews showing that there's a real cohesion between them. I leave South America with my memory cards full of a tiny part of the soul of the South American tattoo culture, with my head full of pictures and with a strong intent of coming back here to learn more about this fascinating tattooing culture.



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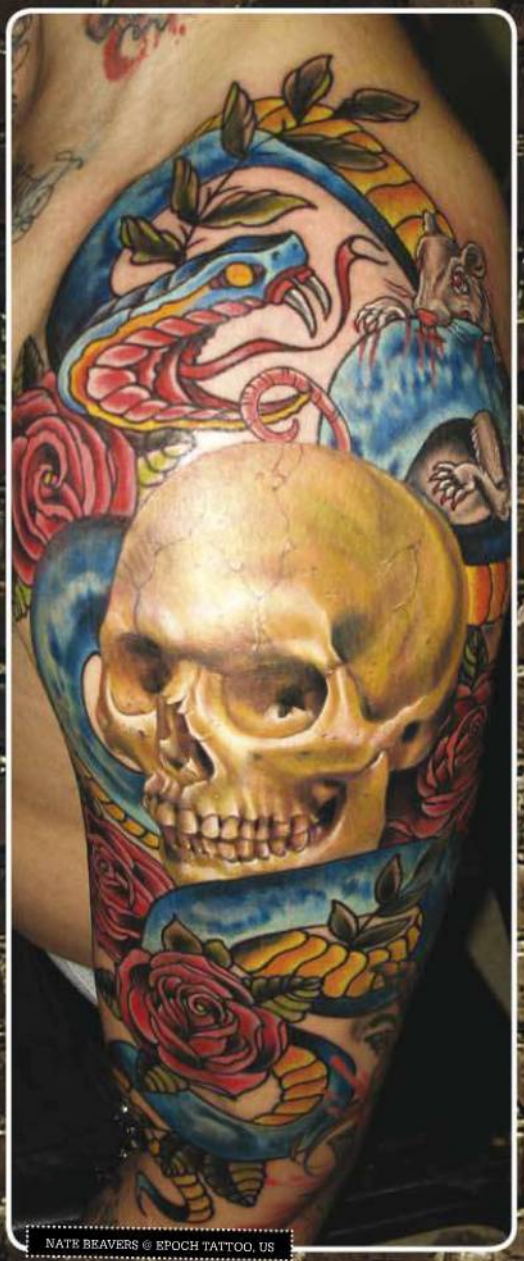
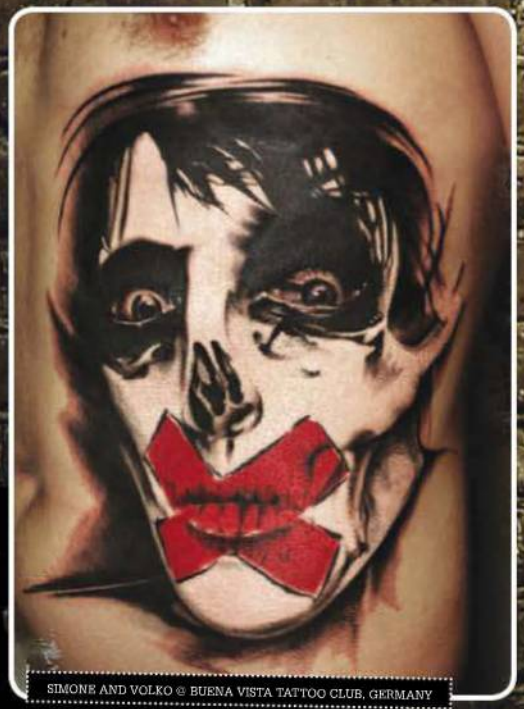


NATE BEAVERS @ EPOCH TATTOO, US



SIMONE AND VOLKO @ BUENA VISTA TATTOO CLUB, GERMANY

LEAH MOULE @ SPEAR STUDIO

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ANDY ENGEL @ ANDY'S TATTOOS, GERMANY

BJORN @ TATTOO SHOP MALMO, SWEDEN

BORIS, HUNGARY

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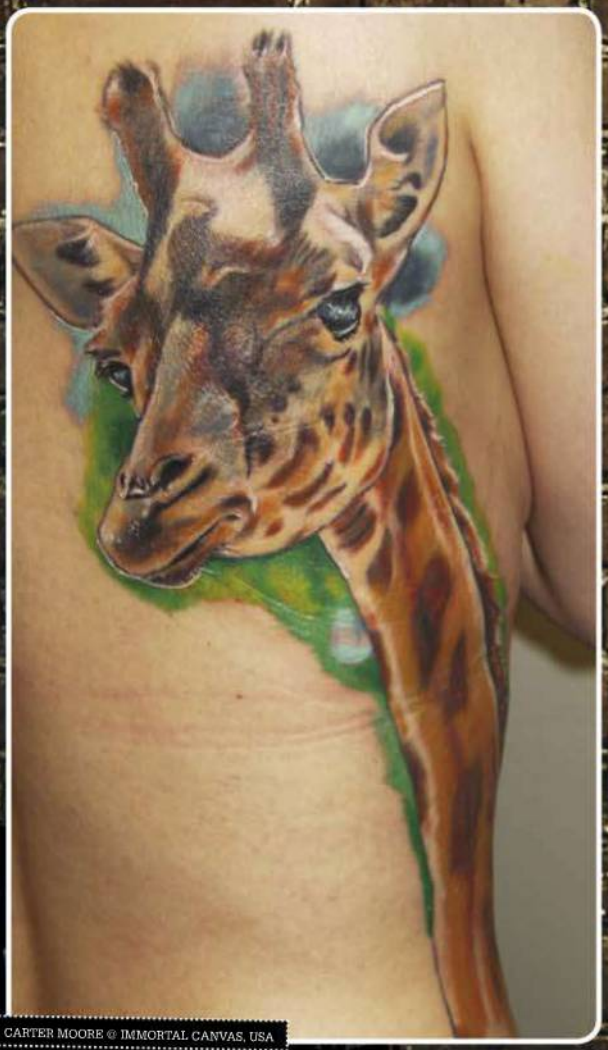
ANDY ENGEL @ ANDY'S TATTOOS, GERMANY

BORIS, HUNGARY



CARTER MOORE @ IMMORTAL CANVAS, USA

DAVE TEDDER @ ALL OR NOTHING TATTOO, USA

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DAWNII @ PAINTED LADY, BIRMINGHAM

TONU MOORE @ BROAD STREET STUDIO, UK

CARTER MOORE @ IMMORTAL CANVAS, USA

DAVE GILBERT @ AVATAR STUDIOS, USA

DIEGO @ MVL, LEEDS

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JAMES ROBINSON @ NINE BRIGHTON

GERRY CARNELLY @ OCTOPUS TATTOO, DERBY

JEE SAYALERO @ HUMAN FLY, SPAIN

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JARETT LIVINGSTON @ GOLDEN DRAGON, CHESTER.

JOHN ANDERTON @ NEMESIS TATTOO, CO DURHAM.

MARIO JOHNSTON@LAMBADI CITY TATTOO, USA

JON VON GLAHN @ OLDE TOWN TATTOO, USA

JIM 4@ BLOOD BROTHERS, LONDON

MATT HUNT MODERN BODY ART

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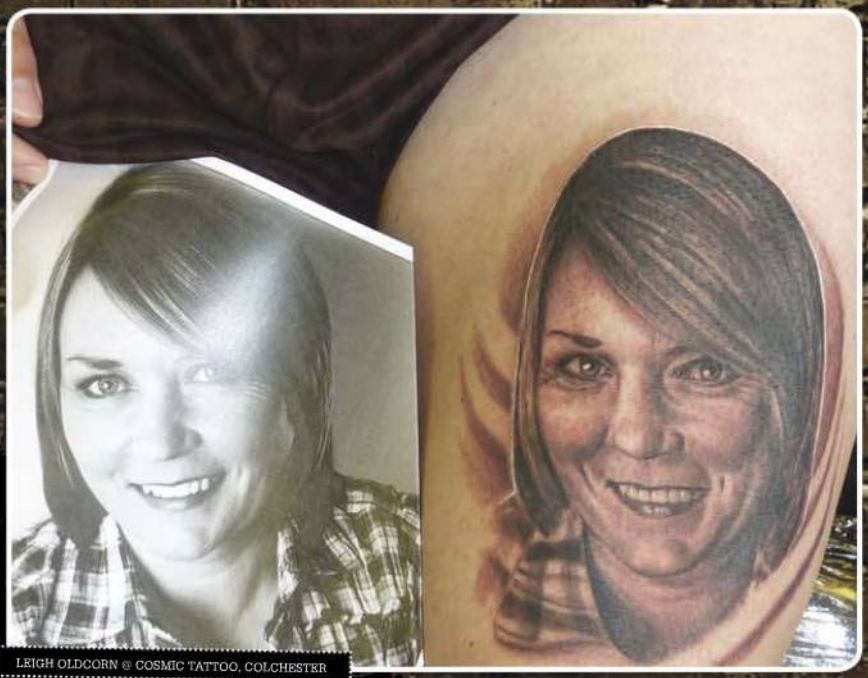
JON VON GLAHN @ OLDE TOWN TATTOO, USA

MARIO JOHNSTON@LAMBADI CITY TATTOO, USA

LARRY FARLEY @ AVATAR STUDIO, USA



LEIGH OLDCORN @ COSMIC TATTOO, COLCHESTER

KEVIN PAUL @ SEVENTH DAY TATTOOS, DERBY

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JON VON GLAHN @ OLDE TOWN TATTOO, USA

LUCI LOU @ MAGNUM OPUS, TATTOO, BRIGHTON

PHIL KYLE @ MAGNUM OPUS, BRIGHTON

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RAY HUNT @ DIABLO TATTOO, KENT

MIREK VEL STOTKER @ STOTKER TATTOO, LONDON

PHIL KYLE @ MAGNUM OPUS, BRIGHTON

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MIREK VEL STOTKER @ STOTKER TATTOO, LONDON

TIM ORTH, ATLANTA, USA

ROBIN @ SQUID INK, FOLKESTONE

STEVE PRIZEMAN @ ETERNAL ART, CHELMSFORD

MATT HUNT MODERN BODY ART

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SARAH SCHOR @ NY ADORNED, USA

RAMON MENDOZA @ SAILOR MONKEY TATTOO SWEDEDN/PERU.

SCOTT MUSTAPIC @ INK V'S STEEL, LEEDS

TIM CROKE @ SECOND SKIN, DERBY

SARAH SCHOR @ NY ADORNED, USA

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STEVE PRIZEMAN @ ETERNAL ART, CHELMSFORD

COTT TRERROTOLA @ MATT'S TRIBAL DESIGN, USA

TIM ORTH, ATLANTA, USA.

WOODY @ WOODY'S TATTOOS, HIGH WYCOMBE

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TRAP TATTOO, ITALY

WOODY @ WOODY'S TATTOOS, HIGH WYCOMBE

STEVE BYRNE @ ROCK OF AGES, HOUSTON, TX, USA

MIKE RUBENDALL @ KING'S AVENUE, USA

GREZ @ KING'S AVENUE, USA

WOODY @ WOODY'S TATTOOS, HIGH WYCOMBE

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WOODY @ WOODY'S TATTOO STUDIO, UK

MYKE CHAMBERS @ ETERNALLY BOUND TATTOO, US

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GOLDEN DRAGON TATTOO STUDIO

MARK BAILEY

Mark Bailey can almost be classed as "one of the old school" tattooists, having spent close to twenty years tattooing. Ask anyone one who has even a passing interest in tattoos & body art, where Golden Dragon Tattoo studio is, and I can guarantee that all will know where the studio is situated.

Mark is by now, a Chester institution and his work and reputation spreads far wider than Cheshire and the surrounding area. In the newly re-vamped studio there are numerous awards proudly displayed amongst the skater inspired decor that bare testament to his tattooing talents.

Mark is no stranger to having his tattoos printed in magazines from all over the world and has been a regular in Skin Deep on many occasions. Having just expanded into the premises next door and increased his tattooing team by two, we thought it was time to catch up with the "cakemeister general" for a bit of a chat.

SO WAS THIS THE FIRST SHOP YOU HAD IN CHESTER?

Yeah, I started in this shop with Stuart, Stuart Burkes. What happened was, I came back from travelling and where are we… beginning of '92. And I ended up in Chester because my mum had moved to Chester, and I just needed somewhere to sleep really. And we'd been hanging around tattoo shops in Bangkok and basically just titting around tattoo shops. I got back here and went for a drink with a mate, and he goes, "there's someone about to open a shop here in Chester, you wanna go down and see who it is?" And the first week it opened I walked in and asked for a job, and brushed the floor that night.

FANTASTIC, SO PERFECT TIMING THEN?

Yeah, and then I got two bar jobs and held them down 'cos I got paid nothing here. These guys have it easy nowadays! I say to these guys, "it's taken me 20 years to work out what's the best yellow in the world!

IT'S GOOD THOUGH, IF THE REST OF THE TEAM ARE THAT KEEN.

Well yeah, I put in what they put in. Time, effort, all of it, I'll match them. And they open and close, I don't. The pair of them are here to open and close every day. So yeah, ended up here with Stuart, had a very lose apprenticeship.

SO WERE YOU TATTOOING BEFORE THAT THEN?

No, no that was it. And then I got half of it five years in, then I got all of it, where are we now… must be about eight years. He died last year, which is a shame.

A LOT OF TATTOOISTS CAN HAVE A BIT OF A TRANSIENT LIFESTYLE, SOUNDS LIKE YOU DID ALL YOUR TRAVELLING BEFOREHAND AND SETTLED DOWN

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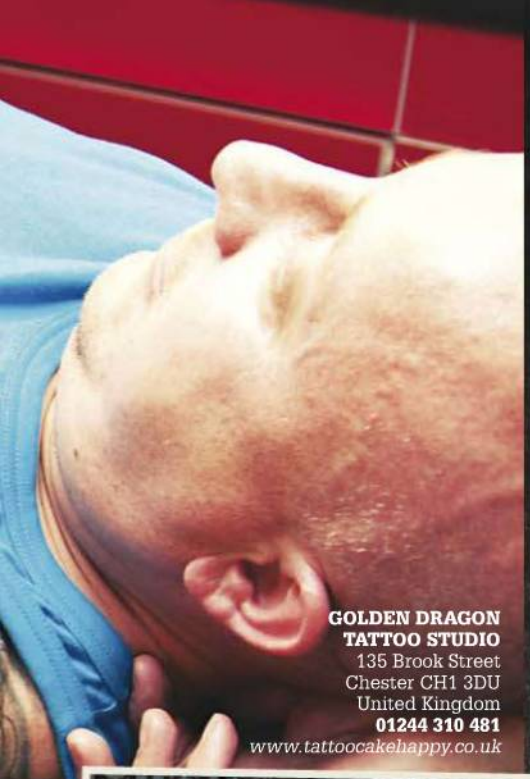

GOLDEN DRAGON TATTOO STUDIO
135 Brook Street
Chester CH1 3DU
United Kingdom
01244 310 481
www.tattoocakehappy.co.uk

EVERY YEAR, I LOOK AND DECIDE ON SOMETHING I'M 'GONNA PUSH ON. I LIKE ALL ROUNDER'S, I DO, AND I KNOW IT'S BECOMING LESS AND LESS LIKE THAT, WITH MORE FOLK SPECIALISING.

WHEN YOU CAME HOME?
Yeah absolutely, I had about two, three years where I was just floating around Indonesia, Thailand and all that. Just to get stoned! It got to a point where I can remember just starting here and my two friends that I went travelling with then went away for a twelve month trip, and I can remember them saying we're "doing things like this, or are you gonna carry on?"

ANY REGRETS?
Erm… I used to miss the beach, I used to miss that kind of lifestyle. Although everyone thinks this is, what do they call it… a "lifestyle occupation", and they think… alright compared to digging holes for twelve hours a day, maybe it is easy, maybe it is. But trust me, you know as well as I do in this game! I put my nose out early. I've always tried to be on the latest thing. Every year, I look and decide on something I'm 'gonna push on. I like all rounder's, I do, and I know it's becoming less and less like that, with more folk specialising. It doesn't mean I don't like specialists; I've looked at specialists to improve each of them and work towards it. I did get a lot of stick, that I was doing Tony's (Ciavarro) stuff. And they've gotta remember, I was trying to do New School stuff, well, before some of these tattooists were even born, when it was New School stuff. And I've noticed there's a few people like, Leah (Moule), Matt Lapping kind of getting attention for getting that saturated look. It's not easy. And they don't get the credit that maybe Bez gets, you know?

PEOPLE THINK THAT IT LOOKS EASY...
Yeah, and you try and saturate a piece of skin with ink and get that gloss. And we're all chasing Tony, no one saturates better than Tony. But that density, that every single millimetre of skin is drenched in ink. It's not easily done, and I don't think they get credit as to how hard it is to pull that look off well. You get a few of them copying but its got a flash look to it. There's nothing more copying than realism. I'm doing realism now. I had a guy hit me on the website that said my bio-mech looked like a piece of Dan Marshall's and that I'd obviously been inspired by him and I should have credited the photo, that I'd used reference. I go on his website, and there's a Yoda portrait. So what you 'gonna do, credit George Lucas? He copied a photo!

YOU HAVE NOT LONG INCREASED THE STAFFING LEVELS HERE TO THREE ARTISTS, CAN YOU TELL US WHY THAT WAS AFTER SPENDING MANY YEARS WORKING BY YOURSELF?
Well yeah, and I wanted somebody else to do some new stuff with me. We work on stuff together now, and that's been the best part about having more people here. But it's got to be the right people. They all need to bring something to the mix. I had someone say to me at Tattoo Jam last year, I was having a beer and I won't say who it was, but they came and sat with us and goes, and we were in the middle of this, "I hear you're opening a tattoo hypermarket". And this idiot, who doesn't really➲

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know me, doesn't know what I'm about and we all got up and kind of walked away. And I came away thinking; "is that what people think I'm doing?" 'Cos our first thing here, we put all our savings into this. Emma and myself, we have just had a young boy and do we really need this hassle? And the first thing we said all along, Emma said to me "If you don't maintain quality, you're going the same with it." But that's the tricky bit. Multi artist studios not only maintain but improve standards. And these two guys (Rose Price and Jarret Livingston) add to the mix. There's not a running in period; that was the difference between having an apprentice here and guys that were already tattooing. I wash my hands of apprentices. I think Louis wrote it up best in saying "as long as I've got a hole in my arse I'll never have another one!" It's just disappointing. I put a lot of time in with these guys, and you put a year in with somebody then they take the till from you or they you know, whatever. And we all have our own agendas, but they're out in the open. We all know what we want to achieve, how hard we want to work, how much we want to work, what type of work we want to do. But it's not kept to ourselves, we all help each other and get what we want out of the shop. And we've pulled it off, but it's not easy.

I CAN IMAGINE, AND YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE THE RIGHT MIX OF PEOPLE I SUPPOSE.

Yeah, and I spend more time running a shop than I've ever done. And tattooing less than I've ever done, which is good.

REALLY?

Oh yeah, I halved my workload and I think my quality has doubled. That and having some space, these doors are shut and I get left alone. Jarret's like my wingman, and the rest of the shop carries on. I get told what I need to get told. But we regroup morning and night, before we start in the morning and when we finish. Just with peace, your work just…I've seen it in other artists. And maturity, I think it's an age thing too. I think when you get to a certain age your priorities change. But I've seen other artists and thought; "Yeah, you're in a good place you are. I can tell from your work, there's a difference to it." It's not forced.

A LOT OF PEOPLE SEEM TO BE TAKING A MORE RELAXED ROUTE...

Well Nikole (Lowe) was next to us at Manchester, and I'd never met before. I tell you what, she's ten times the tattooist I thought she was, and attitude? One of the nicest attitudes I've met in tattooing in a long time. Don't care how anyone else gets on with her, don't really give a toss, I don't care about the telly, blah, blah, blah. She was, and I saw her with her customers as well, a quality thing.

THE TROUBLE IS, IF YOU GET INVOLVED IN THAT TELLY THING IT'S GREAT PUBLICITY FOR YOU, BUT IF YOU BECOME THAT POPULAR AND EVERYONE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU; SOMETIMES PEOPLE CAN THINK YOU'RE BEING A BIT STAND OFFISH WHEN YOU HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO TALK TO ALL.

True. You speak to five people and two of them will tell you you're arsey. When in fact you were just too busy. You try tattooing at a convention when there's 300 pissed idiots going "wheeeey", I feel for the guys from the TV programmes.

MULTI ARTIST STUDIOS NOT ONLY MAINTAIN BUT IMPROVE STANDARDS. AND THESE TWO GUYS (ROSE PRICE AND JARRET LIVINGSTON) ADD TO THE MIX.

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YOU WORK LOADS OF SHOWS DON'T YOU; YOU SEEM TO BE A REGULAR ON THE SCENE?

I've been at it for a long time. I only do four shows, but I pick them. I tell you what, some of the bigger shows are just gonna follow London as far as I'm concerned. First two London's in the old venue, were fantastic. It was like, "oh we've got a Dunstable again!" And before you know it, I'm walking down rows and rows of tatty artists, just driving me fucking insane. And it is just someone sat with a floor plan going "oh, I don't know anything about tattooing by the way guys, but if we have a 8 ft square they'll give us £500…" As a businessman, and I do run a business, so I do understand that and how you could get drawn to it, I could have a load of shops and fill them with idiots. That's why we need someone like you, someone who knows how tattooists think and how they feel. It must be hard to find that balance of artists to work conventions...

This is what I thought about Tattoo Freeze, and I mean the way it's pitched to us it's quite nice to be invited but I'm not stupid either, you know what I mean? I quite liked seeing Kev (Shercliffe), Louis (Molloy), Steve (Potton), you know. Guys that I think get a little bit lost. Neither of these guys in the studio could really tell you who Kev is, but Jarret could tell you who's who in every city in America (laughs). And I thought it was quite nice at 'Freeze, but I took the piss out of him and said it was like the geriatrics line. And Louis was in the lift, and I have a little match with Louis every now and again. He doesn't like me but he doesn't like anyone does he! We ran for the lift and it was just closing and somebody opened it, and it was Louis, stood in the lift in the morning of the first day. He did that thing where he pretends he doesn't know who you are and he'd never use your name. And he goes "I didn't know you were working this show", and we go "you're not really interested in anyone else though are you Louis?" and he goes "not really!" and got out the lift and walked off (laughs).

He's like a big cartoon. And people go to me, "You don't know that fool Louis off that TV show do you?" and I say, "He's not a fool"; I just know that I love brutal honesty and that is Louis. The thing I say to everyone here, is that his talent matches his ego. They're not out of sync. He wears Gucci blazers and does whatever nonsense he does. But I think there should be more guys like Louis in tattooing. Vive la difference!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OTHER UK CONVENTIONS?

We aren't fans of southern conventions. We don't even visit many of them anymore. I just like a smile when I get to shows! We're really open. I used to go to a show and say "morning" to every single person and half of them don't even lift their heads. You know I've said it, how hard is it to say hello? You know, we're in the same industry for God's sake, even just on a polite level. Just nod! But I think the northern scene, Is a bit more open.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE OTHER ARTISTS IN CHESTER?

I have nothing to do with them, never have, never will. Watched it happen in too many cities, artists move from one shop to the next.

I JUST LIKE A SMILE WHEN I GET TO SHOWS! WE'RE REALLY OPEN. I USED TO GO TO A SHOW AND SAY "MORNING" TO EVERY SINGLE PERSON AND HALF OF THEM DON'T EVEN LIFT THEIR HEADS.

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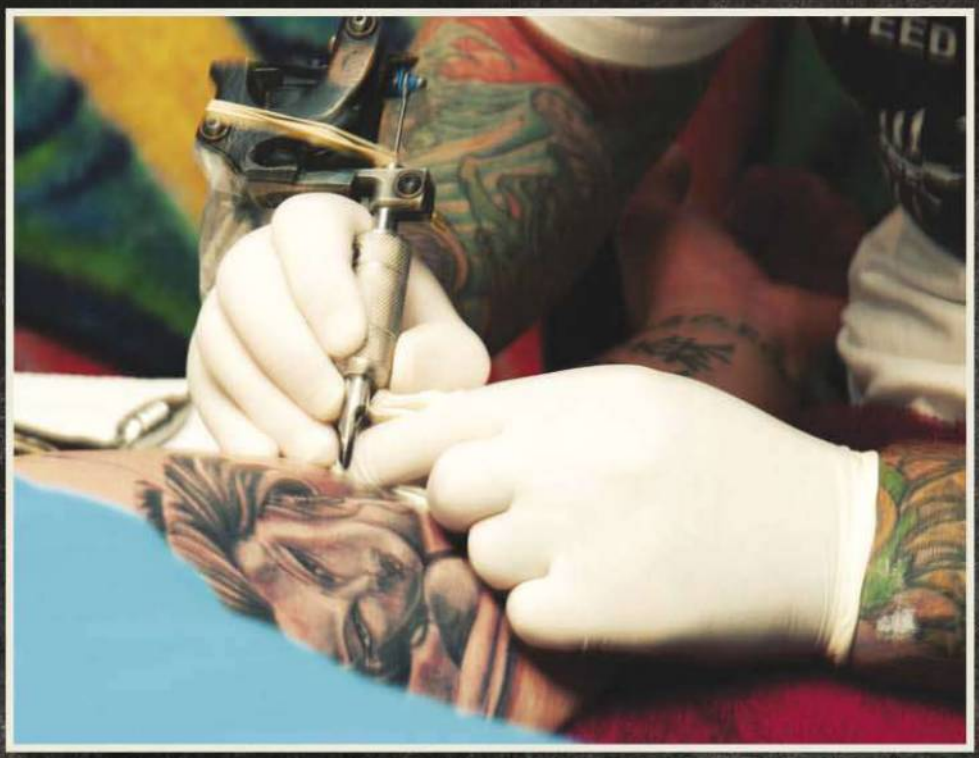
I watch all the staff move around between the shops. They drift in here, you know when you get checked up on. But we're gobby enough about our stuff, we're all online, which shows we've got nothing to hide. I think we've worked really hard to stay on top.

DO YOU GET THE CHANCE TO TALK AND SWAP OTHER IDEAS WITH YOUR FELLOW ARTISTS?

I tell you who put me onto my latest machines; it was Rob Doubtfire. Rob and I have always kind of… I think we're of similar backgrounds, done similar kind of things, both like a drop of colour in our tattooing and we were talking at Tattoo Jam in the car park and he's like "have you tried one of these machines?" and I go, "I don't know what you're talking about, never even heard of them." And he goes "Go home tomorrow and order one because I know your work. You're gonna love them." And then I saw him at Manchester this year and he walked past and I was using it and he was like "ooh, told you so!" I do network but there are key people whose opinions I really value. Paul's the other one as well. I think Paul Naylor's (Indigo Tattoo) has been very good for the tattoo scene. The openness and the way about him is great, I get on with Paul really well. We could do with more Paul's in the tattoo world; he's very open. I think there has been an openness of information in the last 5, 6, 7, 8 years that just never used to exist. I tattooed before the Internet, and obviously things were going to be insular. They were going to be looking in all the time. We waited for our copy of, no disrespect; Tattoo Magazine to drop through the letterbox once a month, and it was the only tattoo magazine. And that was the only connection we had. Then the Internet came, and wow! You've got no excuse.



I think some key artists as well, Joshua Carlton, Mike DeVries, who at the end of the day if quality is shared, it makes the tattoo world as a whole, better. And they must have that attitude. Does Joshua Carlton need to sell books? No, I don't think so, really. Mike DeVries Stencil Stuff, thank god! Thank fucking god for that stuff! We were having issues, and I was looking at these people's work and thinking; "how the fucking hell do you keep that transfer on?" I've been tattooing a long time; I hadn't worked it out. I had a back up of the pieces I wanted to do, and I just didn't feel like I had all the pieces in place. And one of the key pieces was stencil stuff. All of sudden you've got this freedom like when you're painting, that allows you to go anywhere. And instead of sticking to that line shading formula, you can dance around. I always try and work with warm and cold colours. I'm not too big on the colour wheel thing; I just look at the temperature in colours. If you're building some blues up somewhere, you can go and play with some oranges. As long as you keep your area clean… it's exciting, I love it. Stencil stuff, thank god!

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I'VE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD REALISM; IT WAS APPLICATION I HAD A FEW ISSUES WITH. I HAD TO GO BACK TO DAY ONE WITH MY TATTOOING. NEEDLES CHANGED, MACHINES CHANGED, INKS CHANGED.

SO WHAT SORT OF STYLE ARE YOU INTO AT THE MOMENT THEN? I NOTICED YOU'VE SORT OF MOVED ONTO COLOUR REALISM.

Have you noticed? We go to a show, and I make a point that I don't take any photos of anything else. And I spent last winter working really hard on realism, and just wanted to drop it because I was being pigeonholed I think. Everyone was asking me to do monkeys and blah, blah, blah, and I still like doing the monkey, you know. And I guess I also grew up a bit as well, certain key artists were just impressing the hell out of me. I've watched it go on and wanted to get into realism. I've always understood realism; it was application I had a few issues with. I had to go back to day one with my tattooing. Needles changed, machines changed, inks changed. The time spent making a transfer for a portrait, I could spend 10, 12 hours. And it's understanding form as opposed to line and shade. That's the difference really. And you have to map them. You've seen them, it's not like a normal stencil; it's more like mapping out contours. It takes a lot of to educate yourself after 20 years of tattooing, to go in a different direction. And it's unnerving, I make a perfectly good living, I have hopefully a little bit of respect for what I do, why expose yourself to getting it wrong? I'm really pleased, it's worked out.

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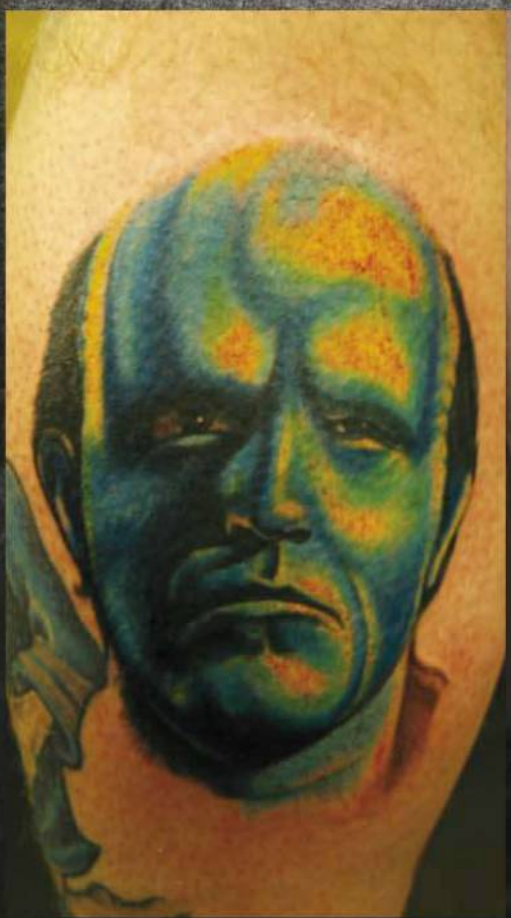
I like the moody stuff, but I like the more fun stuff too. I'm not really into doing the scary stuff with too much gore. But then I don't watch horror films, at all. But I like doing the Batman's and all that kind of thing. And everyone knows what it is. It's getting that drama into the piece. Hopefully my realism still has a little look of my tattoos. I've recently done an Iron Man 2 tattoo at Liverpool, but I've redrawn it with a full bio-mech background. It's very easy for someone to say "oh can I have a Joker done". Well, for me, Bez did the Joker. It's done, he nailed it. I've watched a lot of people go to the same reference, not copying his tattoo, but his reference. That picture is available online, you know, where he took it from. What we're trying to do is stop movies, so we get a different pose, or a different look. Just try and do something slightly different with it. If it's the background or the colouring, instead of just saying "that's the best one we've ever seen, we'll do that one." No, let's try and work on it. Me and Jarrett work on all our stuff together, and we really get off on that. Where can we find an odd look, and hopefully our Iron Man one... yeah it's Iron Man, but hopefully there's something a little bit funny and little bit clever. There's a steam train of realism isn't there! For me, colour work is back in.

YEAH, FOR YEARS BLACK AND GREY WAS THE THING. Yeah I feel like it's been a long time. We had New School years, lots of us carried on doing it. But then the world became obsessed with black and grey work. And I just think colour work was getting ignored. And some people were worried about how long it would last, colours fading and all the rest of it. We were all doing it thinking "this is harder than that black and grey shit, I can put this same design on in black and grey in a fraction of the time of what it takes to do properly in colour." But now thanks to some ace tattooists, colour work is right out there and in people's faces.

THIS IS HARDER THAN THAT BLACK AND GREY SHIT, I CAN PUT THIS SAME DESIGN ON IN BLACK AND GREY IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME OF WHAT IT TAKES TO DO PROPERLY IN COLOUR.



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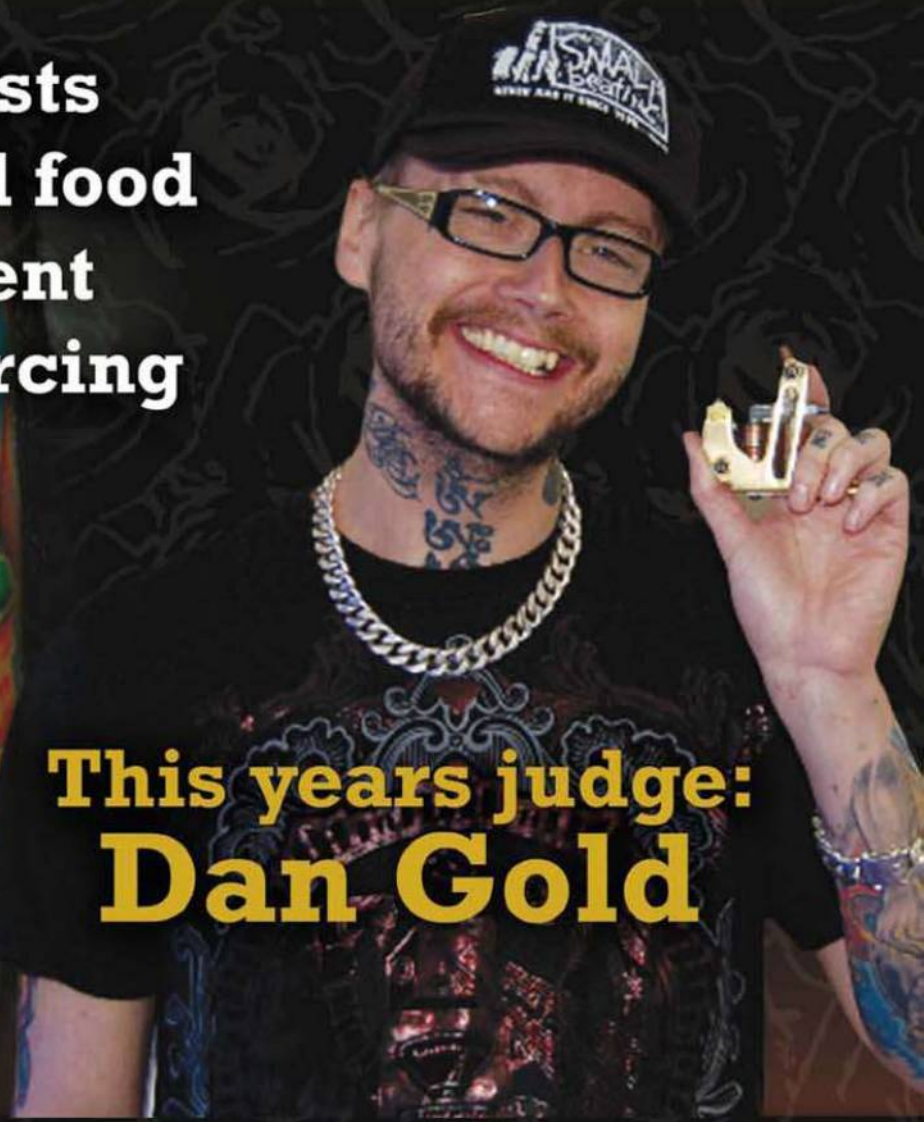

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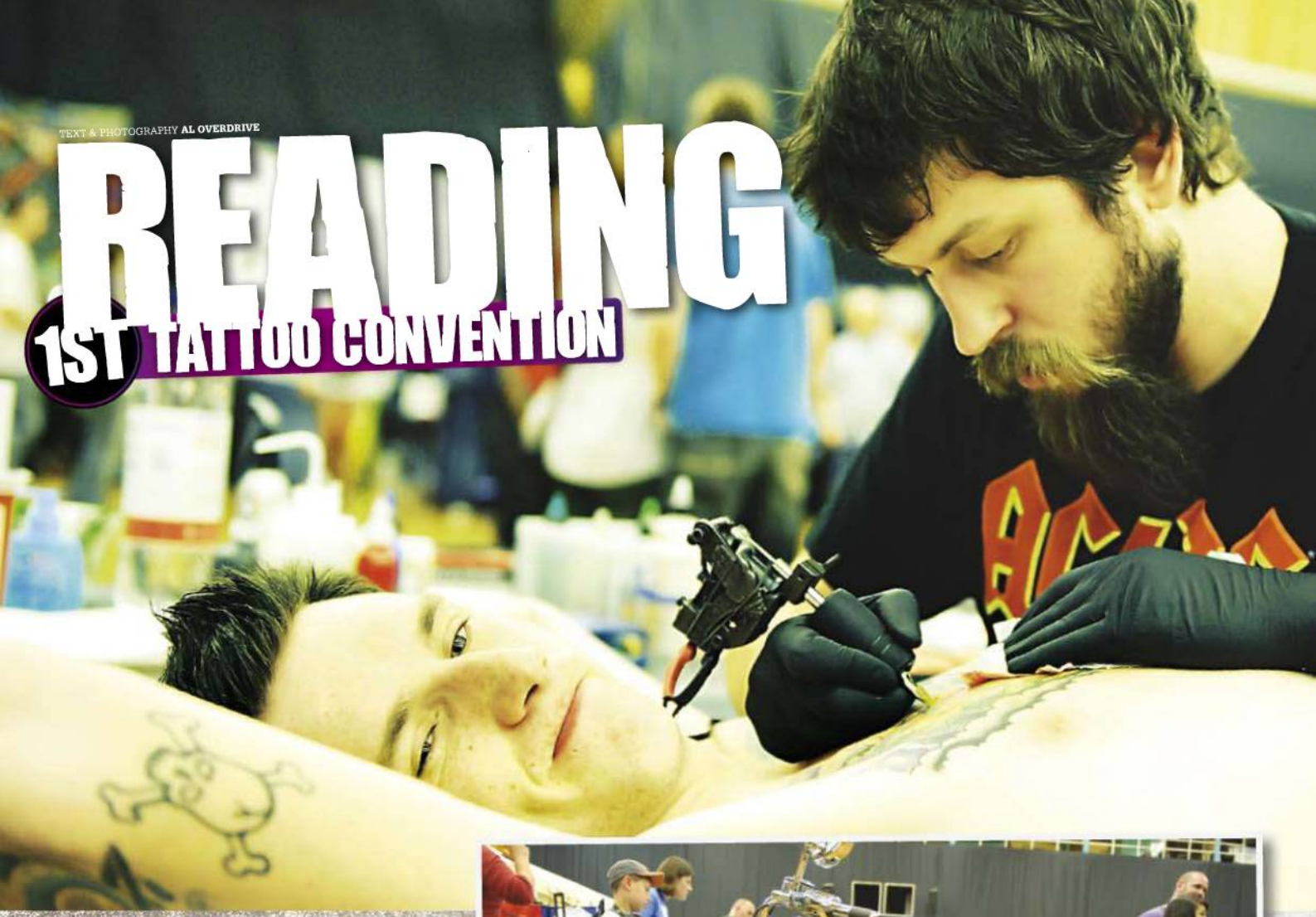


RICHARD BY ROSE @ INK N STEEL, LEEDS

Many people predicted the rise of tattooing in popular culture was a fad and that interest would soon drop off. Despite the tough ride the economy has had in the last eighteen months, the surge in popularity of getting tattooed shows no sign of following in the footsteps of the bankers. Alongside this we have seen a rise in the number of new conventions, which has led to some people asking, "Do we need yet another tattoo convention?" The answer depends on what you want from a convention; just as the music and lifestyle magazines on the newsstands cater to different tastes, so can conventions.

There is an argument against having too many conventions; you can only attract a finite number of impressive tattooists before you risk each convention being a copy of another. The same goes for bands; how many festivals can they play before reaching saturation in any given year?

Reading festival caters for a wide range of tastes and has been successful for many years. In some ways it begs us to ask why Reading hasn't got its own tattoo convention?

No Limits Tattoos and piercing has taken on the task of giving Reading its first tattoo convention. Understanding how easy it is to access London from Reading, the organisers seem to have decided not to try to compete with the bigger, established conventions (such as London

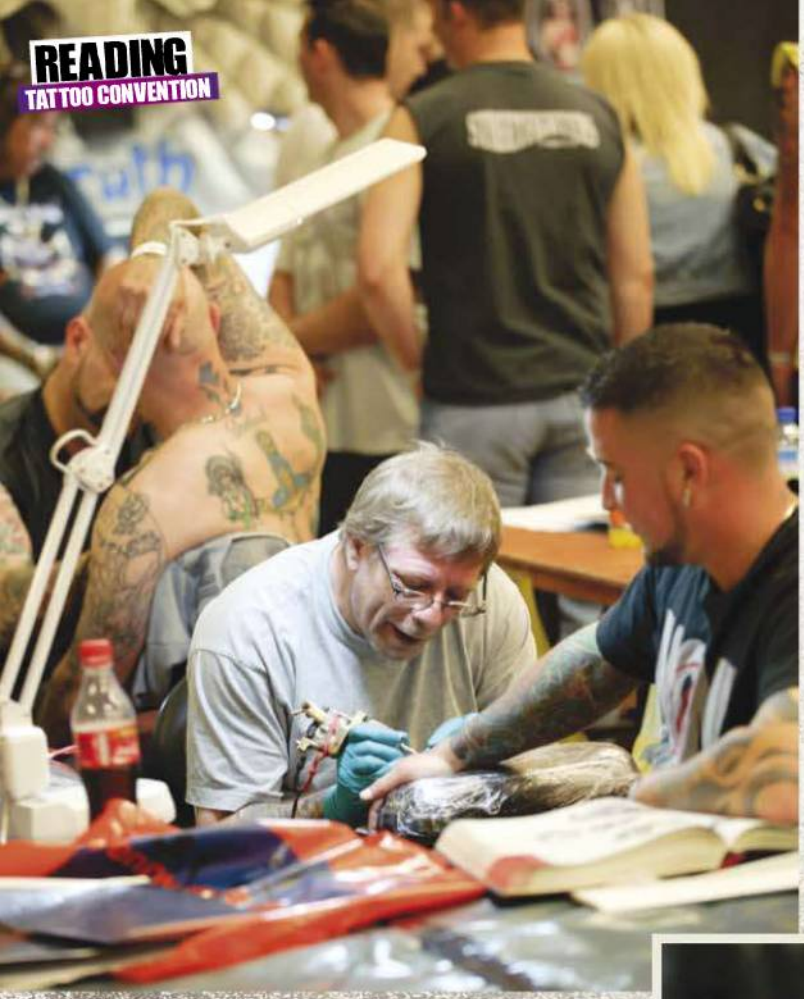
One of the benefits of attending smaller conventions is a chance to see the work of artists you don't already know about, as well as have a quick chat with them.

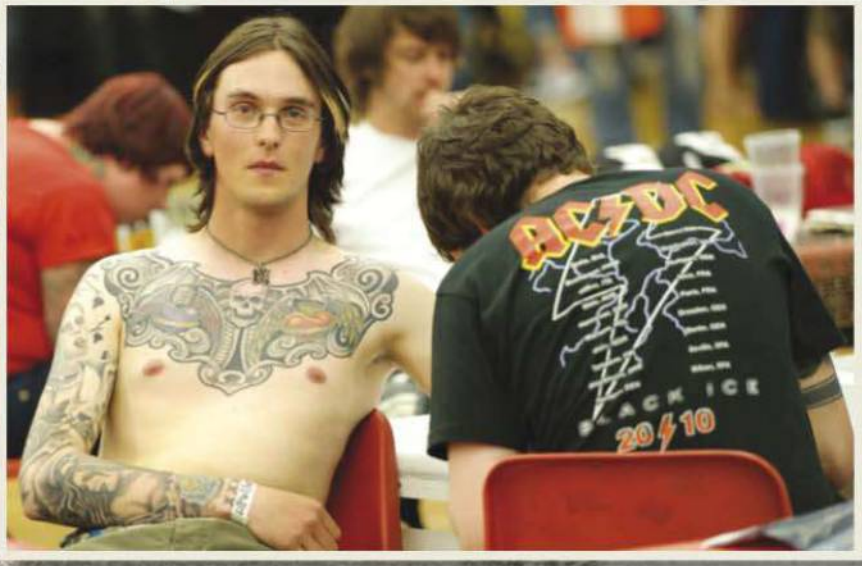
International Convention and Liverpool Tattoo convention, which was happening on the same day). Instead they have focussed on putting on a one-day event, with live entertainment and a distinctly relaxed air about the place. The event itself had a feeling of intimacy that other conventions can lack and had a family-friendly atmosphere. This is a refreshing change to the hustle-and-bustle we have come to expect from conventions and could be the key to the future success of the Reading convention.

Regardless of the laid-back atmosphere, the event wasn't lacking in visitors. With nearly three quarters of the tickets sold as pre-sale, it definitely had people's attention despite a lack of publicity. Less than an hour after the doors opened, the convention was humming with activit

One of the benefits of attending smaller conventions is a chance to see the work of artists you don't already know about, as well as have a quick chat with them.

Walking round the convention, it was pleasing to see a variety of artists working in and offering plenty of different styles. The artists themselves had come from around the country – Ouch tattoos had come down from London, Cherub Tattoo Parlour from Wiltshire, Arron Willett of Portsmouth and some artists from much➔





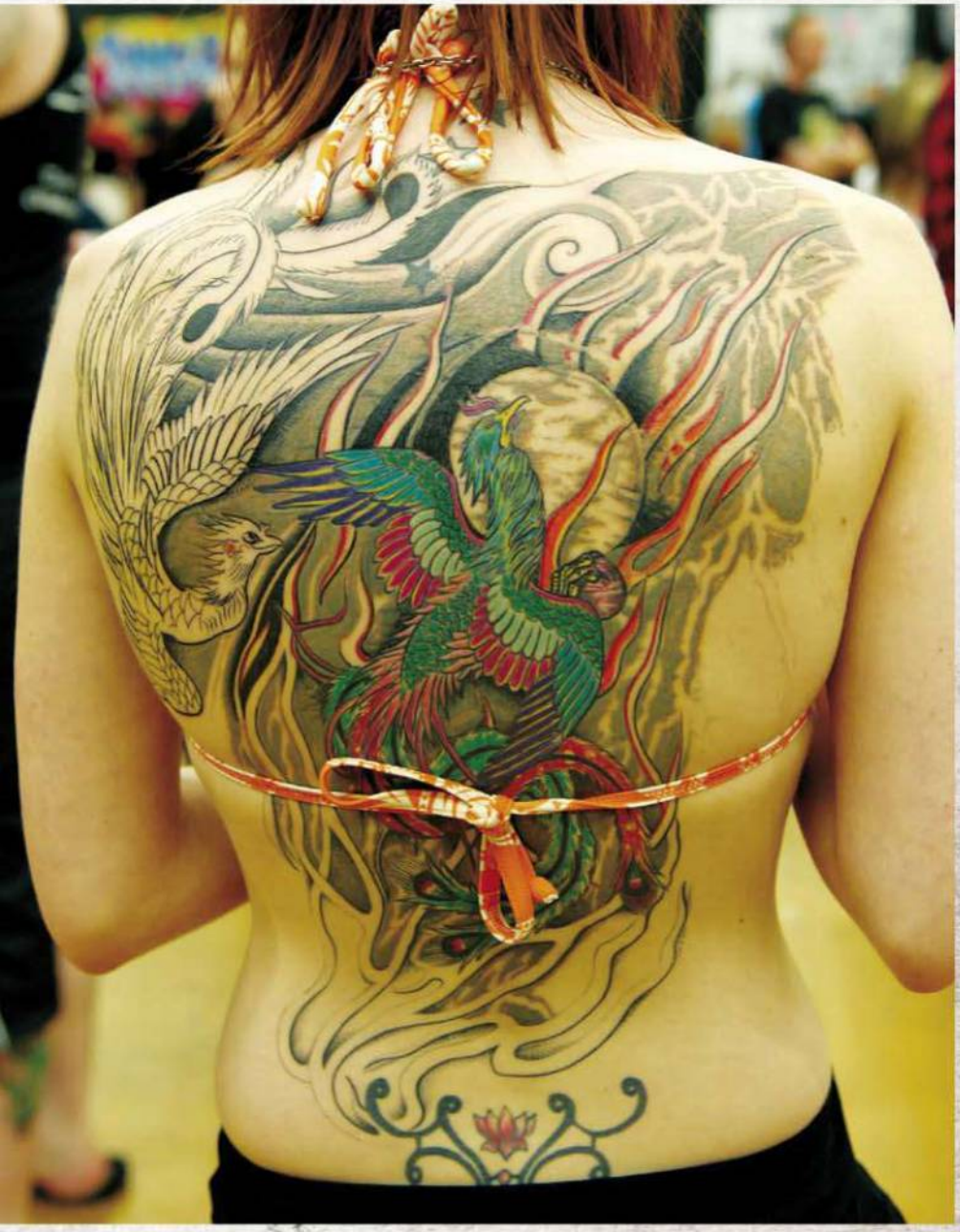
further afield (including those flying a Scottish flag). It was also a pleasure to see the guys from Cutthroat Tattoo out and busy at their station, as were the artists from Ink in 2 Skin and also Eternal Tattoo. Chris Cougar (of No Limits Tattoo) may win his own award for most amusing sign of the day reading; "What the fuck is Miami Ink and London Ink?"

The crowd itself comprised of everyone from casual observers, to the most heavily tattooed along with new and old tattoo fans and many families, where the parents were able to proudly display their ink while looking at the portfolios and keeping their children entertained.

In the afternoon, the entertainment was supplied by two musical acts: the first of these was a Reading based band called Junction XIII whom are self confessed 'trash rawkers'. Looking like a cross between the Backyard Babies and Steel Panther, the band blasted through an entertaining set of songs inspired by the same trashy rockset. They proved an enjoyable distraction and many in the crowd stayed to watch their entire set, which was enjoyable despite the singer feeling the need to constantly share with the crowd how his choice of 'medication' kicked in halfway through the set, followed by trying to spit water over the photographers (and missing I'm pleased to report). Those attempts at rock and roll excess might impress the under eighteens, but failed to endear those watching the act. Music like this is never going to appeal to everyone but is the kind of party rock and roll that complements the atmosphere that a tattoo convention has.

The results of the judging were up next and having spotted some of the art lined up earlier for the competition I was eagerly waiting to find out who had won. I was not surprised to see that the Seth (Attattooed) won 'best backpiece' for the peacock inspired art he was tattooing on Lauren. It is only a shame we were not able to see all the other pieces (I guess we are getting used to being spoilt by huge video displays at the larger conventions). Again, this convention served to remind us that there are plenty of good tattooists outside of the London area and that this is a good opportunity to check out lots of different artists portfolios, all in one place. It certainly beats travelling from shop to shop!

Once the awards had been given out, we returned to the entertainment, this time provided by MC's Switch, Smiley, Data and Killa boi. An entertaining and competent crew, they delivered their material in a confident and almost flawless manner. Unfortunately, in combination with the searing heat and having gone on just after the competition winners were announced, many of the crowd felt they needed to go



I sincerely hope they do plan to run this convention for a second year, as it has a lot of potential to develop into an event that is worth making the time in your calendar to attend.

outside and catch some fresh air. However, the boys kept going and entertained the members of the crowd who remained to watch them. Once they had finished their set, the convention slowly started to wind up, with various satisfied attendees making their way to their cars.

As a fledgling convention it did really well, but wasn't without its flaws; the lack of a dedicated website and event publicity didn't seem to harm the ticket sales, but didn't help the event either. This may have been a deliberate move by the organisers to let the convention develop its own identity before pushing it on the masses. For the majority of people the on-site catering would be fine, but as vegetarians we were forced to look elsewhere for food (unless you count a token gesture salad as adequate catering), in 2010 I would have expected a greater variety, especially when you consider the location of the event gave you few options to eat elsewhere. The competition judging went without a hitch, although there were some complaints that it was being judged too early in the afternoon for some of the artists and collectors to submit their fresh ink for entry into 'best of day'. These minor niggles didn't make or break the event and can easily be ironed out in time for next year's convention.

I sincerely hope they do plan to run this convention for a second year, as it has a lot of potential to develop into an event that is worth making the time in your calendar to attend. Whether or not the future of tattoo conventions in the UK involves smaller, more intimate events complementing the larger 'blockbuster' long weekend conventions or if the public gets 'convention fatigue' and the number shrinks, will be decided over the next couple of years by the choices the public make.

FULL WINNERS LIST AS GIVEN BY THE ORGANISERS:

BEST SMALL
JESSE BY SETH, ATTATTOOED

BEST LARGE
SIM BY LEIGH OLDCORN, COSMIC TATTOO

BEST BLACK/SKIN
ARRAN BURTON BY LEE OLDCORN, COSMIC TATTOO

BEST BACKPIECE
LAUREN BY SETH, ATTATTOOED

BEST IN SHOW
IAN ROYAL BY ANDY THOMPSON, ANDY THOMPSON TATTOO STUDIO

BEST PORTRAIT
KATHY WARD BY IAN, NO LIMITS

BEST SLEEVE
PAUL BY JAMES, WOODY'S TATTOO STUDIO

BEST BACKPIECE
IRISH MICK BY IAN, NO LIMITS

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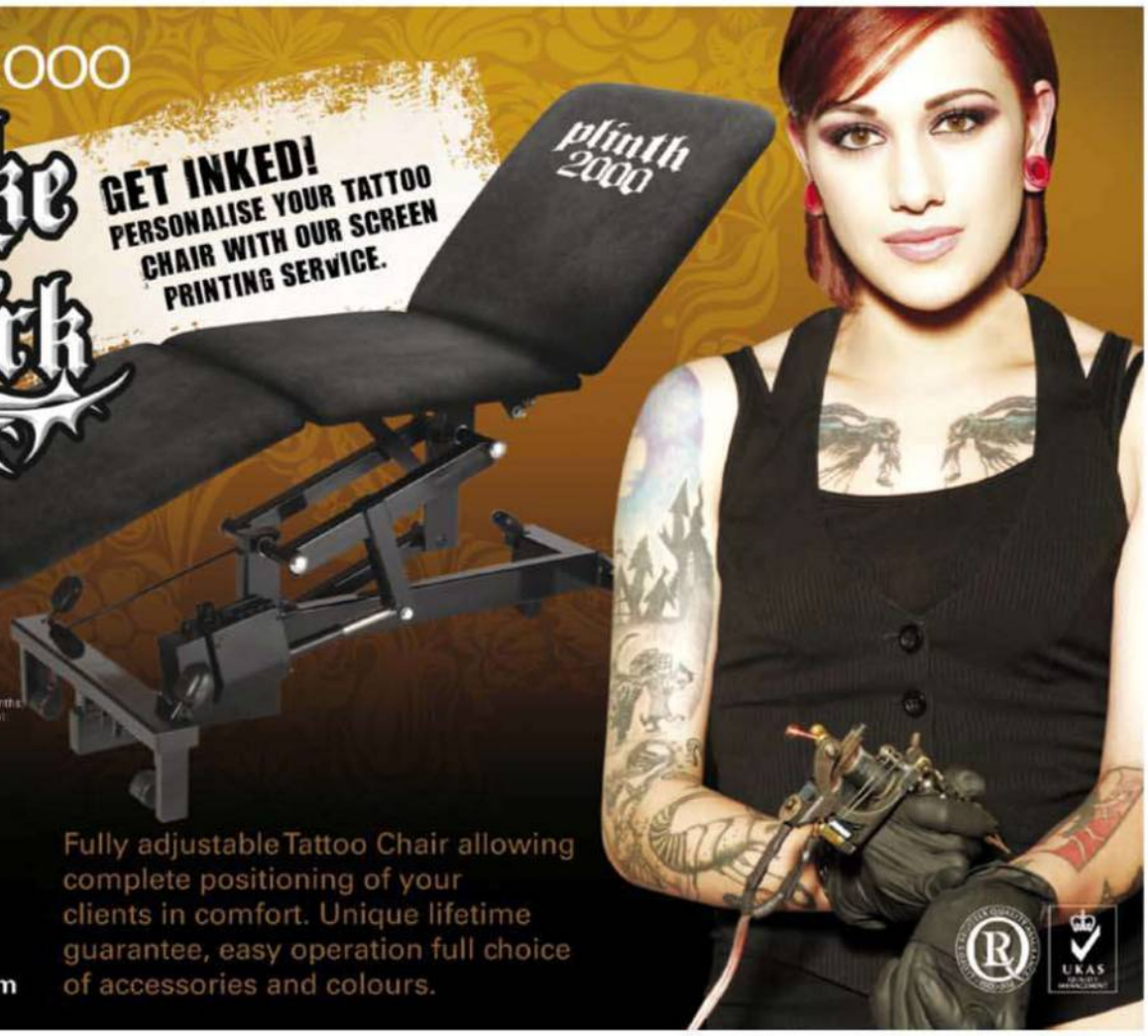

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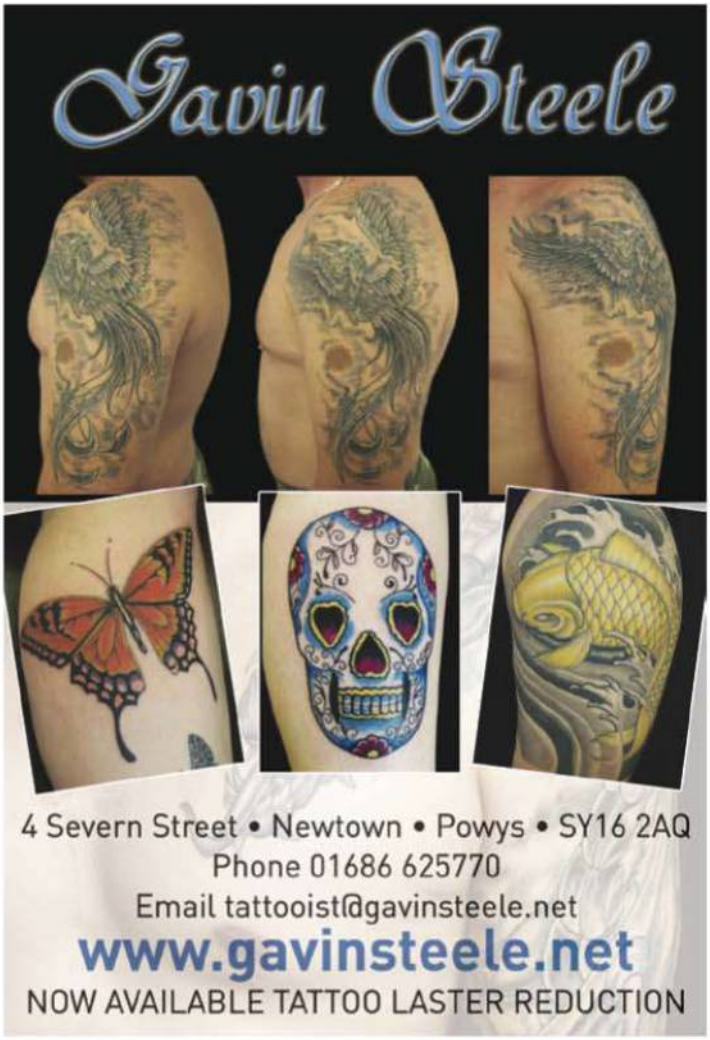

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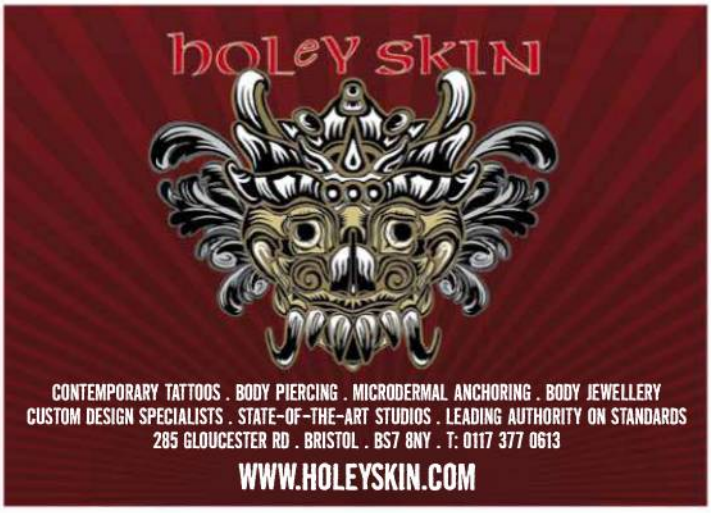

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LEPA

I first met Lepa at the 2009 London Tattoo Convention, where she caused something of a stir. At the time we didn't get much of a chance to talk as she was constantly surrounded by a posse of photographers, all of whom seemed keen to persuade her to pose for as long as possible.

We did arrange to schedule a shoot for the future, but unfortunately that never transpired. Therefore I was delighted and surprised when a mutual friend recently hooked up Lepa and myself out of the blue and a shoot was finally arranged. Lepa is very experienced and professional as a model and this, combined with her natural beauty, friendliness and fantastic ink made it an afternoon to remember.

My heritage is quite mixed as my dad is Nepalese and my mum is Bengali.

I have always loved tattoos, especially the traditional Japanese styles.

Initially, my dad introduced me to tattoos. He used to love watching the old school Samurai movies and we would often end up watching them together. I can remember that when I first saw those tattoos, I just could not believe how incredibly beautiful they were. I have been drawing and painting since before I could even write my own name and I was very much in awe of how we could actually adorn our bodies with tattoos in a way that is such a unique medium for expressing art. In terms of my own artwork, I love drawing things that inspire me and I get a lot of that inspiration from the work of H.R. Giger who designed the Aliens in the movie of that name starring, Sigourney Weaver. Giger has influenced my artwork no end, what more can I say, except that he is pure genius.

When deciding to get tattooed, I always knew that I was going to get a full bodysuit; there was no question about it. I didn't want random tattoos here and there; I had made up my mind from an early age that a full-scale bodysuit was what I wanted. It was much harder to convince George Bone, the tattooist, that I was serious about this. In fact, when I first went into his studio and explained my plan to him, I don't think he actually believed me. In order that he could see just how committed I was, I just kept going back to the studio, but even so, George still made me wait about eight months before allowing me to undertake my first sitting. George told me that he just wanted to make doubly sure that I was really serious and understood the implications of what I was doing.

I have had some work done by Horiyoshi Souryou, (kazuyoshi), Horiyoshi III's son, he tattooed some Sakura's, (blossoms), on my lower left leg at the London Tattoo Convention in 2009. That was a very special experience➲

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When deciding to get tattooed, I always knew that I was going to get a full bodysuit; there was no question about it.

for me as I adore his father's work and I have also modelled Horiyoshi III clothing for them at the convention too. The rest of my tattoo work was and is, being done exclusively by George Bone. George is not only an incredible artist, he is a legend in his own right, and as the years have gone by, I now consider him to be a close friend. He is the most patient and humble person you could ever meet, he listens to your ideas, then offers his own input so that everything he produces is unique, I just love his style. I do try to pop into the studio whenever I get the chance and it seems that old friends always surround him. George has a charisma that causes people to gravitate towards him and it seems to me as an observer that all of the people that he has tattooed over many years are still very close to him. I can honestly say that I love the man; I just cannot say enough good things about him.

This may sound masochistic, but I do actually love the process of getting tattooed as much as I love the end result! There are a few spots that always seem to catch me unguarded, like the ribs, but I think I'm addicted or immune to the pain of the needles. I

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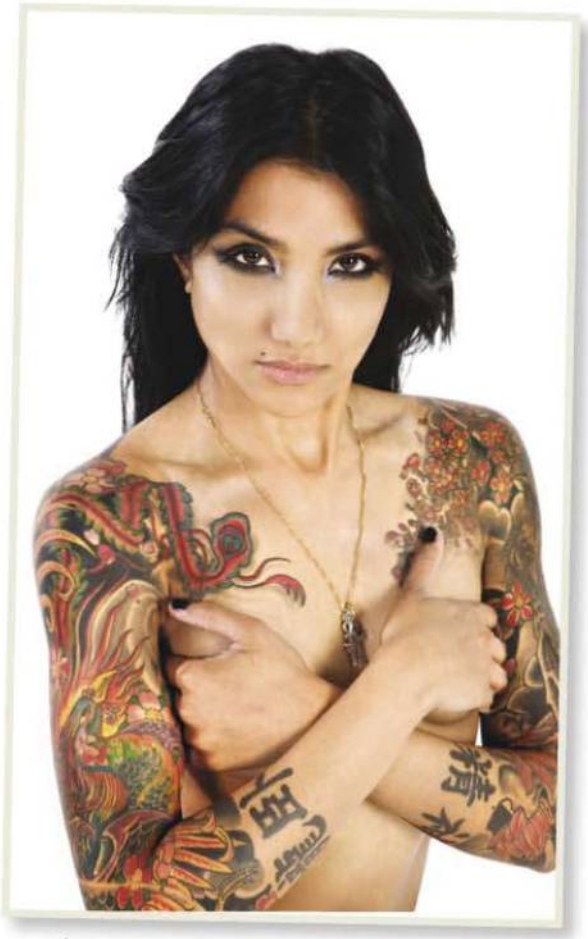
This may sound masochistic, but I do actually love the process of getting tattooed as much as I love the end result!



generally sit for six hour sessions and the after effects are often worse than the actual tattooing as I get really bruised after such long sittings, but no pain, no gain, right?

Regarding my tattoos, I get mixed reactions from my family, but I have to say that we are not the most 'traditional' family in the world. We all have our own likes and dislikes, we are all very different and tend to accept each other for who we are as unique individuals and on top of that my family knows how art is a very big part of who I am. I imagine that they see it as an external extension of my inner self, maybe not everybody's cup of tea, but it is what it is.

I also get mixed reactions from the general public; they either look at me and tut or shake their heads, silently disapproving, or on the other hand look at me with interest and enthusiasm and ask me lots of questions about my tattoos. Either way it's cool, I know what I have done is not for everyone.

As far as the modelling goes, it isn't something I actively sought out; it just kind of found me! It really took off after the London Convention 2009, as that was where I got the most exposure. Since then I have had a lot of offers from talented and established photographers and I am trying to get around to working with some of these. I have already modelled for some amazing photographers, real artists in their own right. People like Ashley from Savageskin photography, who did this shoot, also Doralba Picerno and Craig Burton, to name but a few. Working with these individuals has given me a good basic introduction, as well as direction and experience, in terms of modelling. In some ways it's been like a whirlwind, which I have to admit I wasn't expecting. Apart from that I haven't done anything 'serious' just yet; I'm just trying to keep my feet on the ground for the time being. Modelling has been an altogether pleasant surprise, albeit unexpected, so I'm just waiting to see where it carries me.

I love the way the camera seems to capture my essence and what I find fascinating is that's something that other people often notice and point out to me too. The strange thing is that I'm actually more confident in front of the camera without any clothes, much more so than when I am wearing them.

As for the future, I want to get into tattooing, there's really nothing more that I would rather do with the rest of my life. I have fallen in love with everything about it, what more can I say?

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DEMON

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He took art in school and then went to college, studied art and took it from there. Demon started getting tattooed when he was eighteen, and after getting his first tattoo, fell in love with it. It started when a friend of his suggested it as a career when he was around twenty years old, saying "what you gonna do for a job? well you like tattoos...". He took it from there and started hanging around studios...

ARE YOU FROM SUNDERLAND?
Well yeah, Washington, right next to Sunderland.

THERE ARE QUITE A FEW STUDIOS THERE I BELIEVE.
There are a lot of studios there! (laughs)

SO YOU WERE IN ANOTHER STUDIO BEFORE YOU WERE AT TRIPLE SIX?
Yeah, I used to work for a guy called Rob. I also used to work alongside Paul.

DID YOU GET YOURSELF A TRADITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP?
Yeah, I did a lot of cleaning, answering phones, reception work basically. And then I started doing one tattoo a month, so for like the first six months I was just doing one a month, and then more and more after that. And then after that I was just doing street work, like the walk in customers.

CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU GOT YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR, DID YOU TAKE YOUR PORTFOLIO AROUND THE STUDIOS?
Well originally when I went in, and they weren't looking for an apprentice, I just started hanging around the place, working on my portfolio more and more, and just building that up and showing them stuff out of there. And I guess I just sort of wore them down! (laughs) That's pretty much what I did with Bez as well!

BEZ AND ROB KNEW EACH OTHER ANYWAY?
Yeah, Rob had got a few tattoos off him, and that's how I knew Bez as well. Then he started tattooing my leg and I just knew him from that.

SO YOU SAY YOU WERE DOING ART AT SCHOOL, AND YOU SAY YOU WENT TO COLLEGE. HOW DID YOU FIND THAT? BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT I SPEAK TO FIND THAT IS REALLY STIFLING, ALTHOUGH IT SHOULDN'T BE.
Yeah, it depends on the lecturers. If a lecturer has one style of art in mind, and you don't do that style of art, then they're not gonna give you a good enough grade. There's not as much freedom in college I don't think. There are so many weird things too, like drawing with a stick with a piece of charcoal on the end! (laughs) And I'd be like "It looks terrible" and they'd say; "No, no, it looks really good!" scribbling on a piece of paper isn't art to me.

I GUESS ART IS SUBJECTIVE. THE MORE INTERESTINGLY PEOPLE DESCRIBE WHAT THEY'VE DONE, THE MORE THEY CAN TURN IT INTO ART I SUPPOSE?
Oh definitely! A lot of the lecturers couldn't draw too well! And they'd pretend to do so by doing all those wishy washy paintings.

THE FIRST TATTOO I EVER DID WAS JUST A TOUCH UP ON THE SIDE OF PAUL'S HAND. HE'S GOT THIS PIECE AND IT KEEPS ON DROPPING OUT, SO HE SAID "YOU CAN DO THAT, COS IT'S GONNA DROP OUT!"

SO YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN ART, ARE YOU FROM AN ARTISTIC BACKGROUND?
Not from an art background as such, but my Mum used to draw when I was younger and I remember finding a folder with loads of drawings of horses, things like that. So that kind of spurred me on to have a go as well.

WERE YOUR FAMILY TATTOOED?
I tattooed my Mum! It was her first tattoo a couple of years back.

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?
She was like "you're doing it wrong!" And I was like, "how do you know? You haven't even got any tattoos, I'm doing your first one!" (laughs) She's had another one since then, it's the same with my step-dad. They were both anti-tattoos and then I got the job and started tattooing. When I first got my hand done she was like, "What are you gonna do for a job?" And I said, "I've got a job! It doesn't matter!"

SO THEY WERE A BIT RESERVED TO START WITH THEN?
Yeah, I think now they know that I'm serious about it though. I've been doing it for almost three years now. So I think they've taken the hint that it's a job now, not just a hobby!

SO WHAT WERE YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES OF TATTOOS, WHERE DID YOU FIRST START SEEING TATTOOS, OR CONSCIOUSLY BEING AWARE OF THEM?
I've got a terrible memory! Hmm, the earliest I can remember is in school. One lad got a tattoo and he was fifteen, and he came in with a big Sunderland badge his leg. Then I started pestering my Mum and she was like "NO! You've got to be eighteen!" So she made me wait 'til I was eighteen. Then that's when I got fully into it. Apart from that, no one in my family actually had any tattoos until fairly recently. My sister is two years older, so she got her first tattoo two years before me. And as soon as she got that one I wanted one like straight away. So I started drawing things, little designs and stuff. They're all crap when I look back on them now!

SO HOW DID YOU FIND THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF TATTOOING ITSELF? OBVIOUSLY IT'S NOT LIKE A PENCIL, IT'S SOME BIG WEIRD SHAPED THING!
Yeah it was really scary at first. The first tattoo I ever did was just a touch up on the side of Paul's hand. He's got this piece and it keeps on dropping out, so he said "you can do that, cos it's gonna drop out!" He's got this Cheryl Cole thing (laughs), tribal! He said it didn't matter what happened on it, but I was so nervous and shaking. I think I picked it up quite quickly, I got over the nerves pretty fast. But still every now and again you get a real sweat on if you get too nervous. If you think too much about it, it'll just get the better of you.

THERE'S SO MANY THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AT THE SAME TIME, STRETCH, DEPTH, THIS THAT AND THE OTHER...
Yeah there's a lot to take in on your first time. "You've got to press harder, you're going too deep, you need to put more ink in the tube..." All that sort of thing. There's a lot going through your head at once. It's really daunting because you've got two people standing around you, like Rob and Paul both just keeping an eye on things.

HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER THE FIRST ONE?
Really fired up, I just wanted to do more and more.

YOU SAID SUNDERLAND'S GOT A LOT OF STUDIOS. WERE MOST OF YOUR INFLUENCES FROM THESE STUDOS OR ELSEWHERE?
Online is where I get my influences. I think all the shops bar ours in Sunderland are all just street shops, flash on the walls, things like that. Magazines and online are where I get most of my influences from.

SO WHO WOULD YOU CITE AS YOUR MAIN INFLUENCE?
I've always looked up to Bez really, so when I got the job I was just over the moon. I'd spent a couple of years just sort of looking at his work when I first found out about him. I wanted to do ➲

that sort of thing, and we worked on a style that was going to work best for me. There's no point in doing the same thing as each other because everyone's always going to choose him. I used to love Sean Herman's work, but not so much lately. It's not as it used to be, it's a lot different now. It's kind of gone backwards a little I think.

YOU'VE BEEN WITH TRIPLE SIX FOR HOW LONG NOW?
I started early January last year. The year has flown by. For the first six months he just put us back to doing drawings, rather than tattooing.

DID YOU FIND THAT TO BE A GOOD MOVE?
Yes definitely, I've perfected my drawing skills. Rather than trying it out on skin I've tried it on paper first.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE WAY TO GO THEN?
Yeah I do. I think too many people see a design and think "Ooh I've got to try something like that", but they can just try it out on paper first. If you mess up on the skin it's there forever. And people are always going to see it as well, and say "oh yeah nice work, but what about that time when you did that?" So it's always best to do it on paper!

SO YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY ENJOYING YOUR TIME AT TRIPLE SIX THEN?
Oh definitely yeah, I love it. It's always a good laugh as well, a good atmosphere. And customers are appointment only, we don't have many people just walking in so we get a lot of time if we've got free time to draw things up, it's definitely about the art in this studio.

WE'RE CHATTING AT THE NORTH LAKES TATTOO SHOW, IS THIS YOUR FIRST WORKING CONVENTION? HOW HAVE YOU FOUND IT?
Yeah it is, I loved it once the first hour was on the way with. I was sort of nervous to start off with, but I just put my head down and I tried to blank everyone out.

SO YOU WEREN'T FAZED BY THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE WALKING PAST?
I think it's because I've spent the last two or three years going to conventions, I'm used to the crowds and working behind the booth with Bez, even though he'll say otherwise, that I'm terrible at working behind the booth for him! (laughs)

IT MUST BE GOOD TO WORK WITH SUCH TALENTED ARTISTS, TO TAKE THOSE INFLUENCES AND WORK WITH THEM?
Yeah if I have a bit of trouble with the drawing or whatever, Bez will help me out and show me how to do it, and give me a few hints or tips. Every time I finish a tattoo I'm like, "do you wanna come and have a look?" It's good to have that, rather than that just be like, "yeah there's your tattoo, get out the shop" sort of thing. You get more time to get it right.

SO WAS YOUR INTRODUCTION TO BEZ VIA THE WORK THAT YOU HAD?
Initially it was through Paul, I think he got his hand done or booked in to get it done. And then I called in and got this rose on my hand done, that was the first one. And then he started talking about how he wanted new projects, and I was like "I've got a leg free", so we started planning out different things and took it from there.

WHEN WE WENT TO PARADISE GATHERING EVERYONE WAS JUST SO OPEN ABOUT EVERYTHING, IT WAS COOL. WE COULD JUST TALK FOR HOURS ABOUT ANYTHING! IT WAS PURELY ART BASED.

DO YOU FIND GETTING TATTOOED BY ANOTHER TATTOOIST IS QUITE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR CAREER?
Definitely yes. You can learn a lot. For the first two or three sessions I think we just sat down and talked about a lot of stuff, like tattoos and looking through different designs. And he was showing me tips on drawing and things like that. And even if he was running over on a customer he'd be like "just do some painting or something to keep yourself entertained 'til I'm finished." So I'd just sit there and paint away! More time talking than actual tattooing, but it was all good experience!

IT'S GOOD THAT TALKING IMPARTS THAT KNOWLEDGE ONTO YOU...
Yeah and not many people do that either in the tattoo industry, it's too close knit. They don't wanna' share secrets. It's like, why not? We're all interested in the same things! But too many people just don't want to share in case you steal their ideas. You can take their ideas and make them your own, there's nothing wrong with giving a few hints or tips, or talking about anything really. It's too close knit, but it's getting better though. There are people that are a lot more open now. It's nothing like America though! When we went to Paradise Gathering everyone was just so open about everything, it was cool. We could just talk for hours about anything! It was purely art based. It was a strange show to me at first because it's more about the art than the tattooing, but there should definitely be something like that in this country.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY MAKES A GOOD SHOW IN THIS COUNTRY? YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY TATTOO JAM! (LAUGHS)
Just a nice friendly atmosphere I think is the main thing. I think it's cool when you've got a convention that's sort of outside of town, because then you get more people who will travel. That's what was good about Paradise, it's not just people calling in cos they've got nothing better to do.

SO WHO ELSE HAS TATTOOED YOU THEN?
Erm... I got one off Thomas Kynst, Paul who I used to work with, my old boss Rob and Ryan from Indigo Tattoo... I think that's about it.

AND OBVIOUSLY YOURSELF! HOW DO YOU FIND TATTOOING YOURSELF?
It's strange because at first it doesn't hurt as much as you think it's going to hurt. And when it does start to hurt you think "I can't stop, I've only got half a tattoo, I've got to keep going!" (laughs) You get a bit dizzy too because you

PEOPLE ARE GETTING GRANTS NOW BECAUSE OF THE RECESSION, GRANTS TO OPEN UP A STUDIO, WHEN THEY DON'T REALLY HAVE A CLUE ABOUT WHERE TO START.

kind of forget you're tattooing yourself and stand up too quick!

SO OBVIOUSLY YOU WORK IN TRIPLE SIX, I BELIEVE THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE THERE NOW TOO?
Yeah we've just got a new guy, Pixie, who's just started. He's got a very girly name! I'm trying to get him to change it but he won't! He's nothing like the one off LA Ink! (laughs)

AND OBVIOUSLY IN THE STUDIO YOU GET QUITE A FEW GUEST ARTISTS, DO YOU THINK THAT HELPS?
Yeah definitely, it's awesome when we have guest artists. I mean, I just get to sit and watch them or get bits of advice off them if I'm waiting for a client. And then share advice on what sort of setup we use, things like that. obviously when you're at a convention you don't get to do that. Everyone's too busy. So it's nice when they come to the studio to have that time, and talk about things that you wouldn't get the chance to normally.

HOW DO YOU FIND THE INDUSTRY IN THE UK THEN, TOO MANY STUDIOS AND TOO MANY SHOWS?
There's definitely far too many studios.

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People are getting grants now because of the recession, grants to open up a studio, when they don't really have a clue about where to start. The council are like, "here's some money to open up." Even the Job Centre has been ringing us up. Initially we thought they meant work experience, and they were like "no it's a job placement", basically where they pay their wage and they come and work for us. But we've got no need for that sort of thing! If people are that interested they'll bring a portfolio in rather than being like "got any jobs going spare?" "Oh yeah course, as it happens…" (laughs) You can't make a second first impression, so you've got to be prepared. You can't just call in with no portfolio and be like "ah I might come back later if I can be bothered."

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF GOING IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS THEN?

I don't know really, I want to get settled at Triple Six. I would never open my own studio because I can see the hassle Bez goes through! Phone calls, rent, things going wrong, that sort of thing. I could never be bothered with all that! I'd like to travel maybe in the next couple of years, even if just for a month or a nice little tour of Europe. That would be cool.

DO YOU ENJOY GOING ABROAD TO THE OTHER SHOWS THEN?

Yeah I love going to shows, especially the ones abroad. Because for a start you go over there just to visit the show but generally you take a few days either side so you can visit other things. That's what would be cool about doing guest spots and travelling Europe because you'd see all these places that you want to go, but you're working at the same time and you've always got stuff to do. Tattooing gives you a lot of opportunities.

SO HAVE YOU GOT ANYBODY THAT YOU WANT TO THANK FOR HELPING YOU OUT SO FAR?

Obviously Rob Barrow, for giving me my first chance of tattooing and getting me into the industry. Also Paul Heatly, he taught me a lot, the basics, things like that. And also he helped to put a word in with Bez to carry on my apprenticeship with him. So obviously Bez as well. And my Mum! For putting me up rent-free when I first started off and putting up with me. People just want to go straight in and make money, but I spent at least a year unpaid, worked a pub job at night, it was tiring. And I had college so was only doing a few days at the shop, then college finished and I went full time, still unpaid. People don't realise that, and then you'll go home and be drawing, it's kind of like a 24 hour job! That was the big thing too, 'cos before when I was doing street work and flash I'd get home and just relax. But now, doing custom work, I get home and it's straight out with the sketch-pad and draw everything up for the next day.

THEN COLLEGE FINISHED AND I WENT FULL TIME, STILL UNPAID. PEOPLE DON'T REALISE THAT, AND THEN YOU'LL GO HOME AND BE DRAWING, IT'S KIND OF LIKE A 24 HOUR JOB!

DO YOU PREFER CUSTOM STUFF THEN?

It's a lot harder but you get to do what you want to do, put your take on it. Even if you don't necessarily like the idea you can put your take on it, and make it yours. People always think custom is easy!

SO WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS TIME?

Career wise, better! Better than what I am now, I want to constantly improve. Just learn new things. I want to work on more paintings too, I did a lot of paintings when I was in college but I think I've just left it behind. I want to start painting again.

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING PRETTY SATISFIED WHEN YOU'VE DONE A NICE PIECE?

Yeah pretty happy. But then I'll think "maybe if I'd done that a bit differently…", but you can always do that with anything. Even if it's perfect, you look back at it a week later and even in the space of a week you've improved so much. You look back on it and it's so different even a week later. That's a good thing though, because you're constantly improving, it doesn't mean you've done a bad tattoo, it just means you've moved on.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO ADD? ANY SHIT YOU CAN DEAL ON BEZ? (LAUGHS!) HE TOLD EVERYONE ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU WERE PUKING OVER THE BOAT ON THE TATTOO BOAT IN SWEDEN!

On the boat yeah! I could tell you a story! Coming back from Boston, he really needed the toilet, and he ended up going to pee. And he was sort of desperate to go! (laughs) He ran to the toilet, sat down, got up when he'd finished to wipe himself and he looked back, and he'd sort of like shat on the seat. He hadn't quite made the toilet when he sat down so he sat in it! It was all up his back! And in the toilets there was only like really thin toilet paper, so he thought "there's no one else in", so he came out of the cubicle, went round to the sinks, got some hand wash towels, wet them, (laughing through talking), looked in the mirror as he went to wipe, looked right and saw the entire Boston airport. Straight through, there's no doors or anything! It was so funny! Because it was me, Ali and Billy, and we were making jokes like "what's he doing, has he had a massive dump or something? Has he soiled himself?" We were just joking and then he came out and said "you're not gonna believe what's just happened!" And it was true! We were laughing about it so hard we almost missed our flight. That's why I'll never go to a public toilet again! (laughs)

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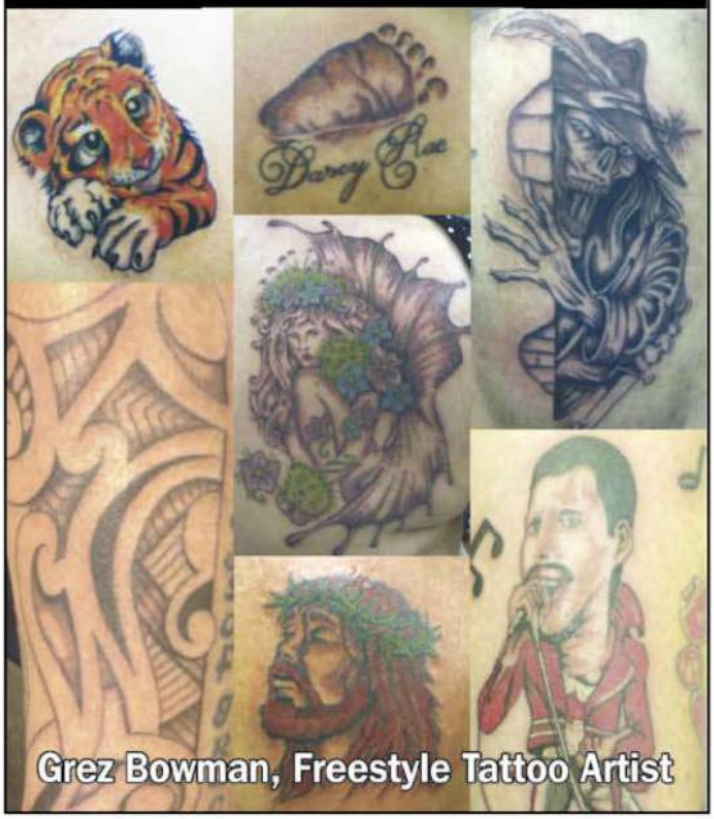

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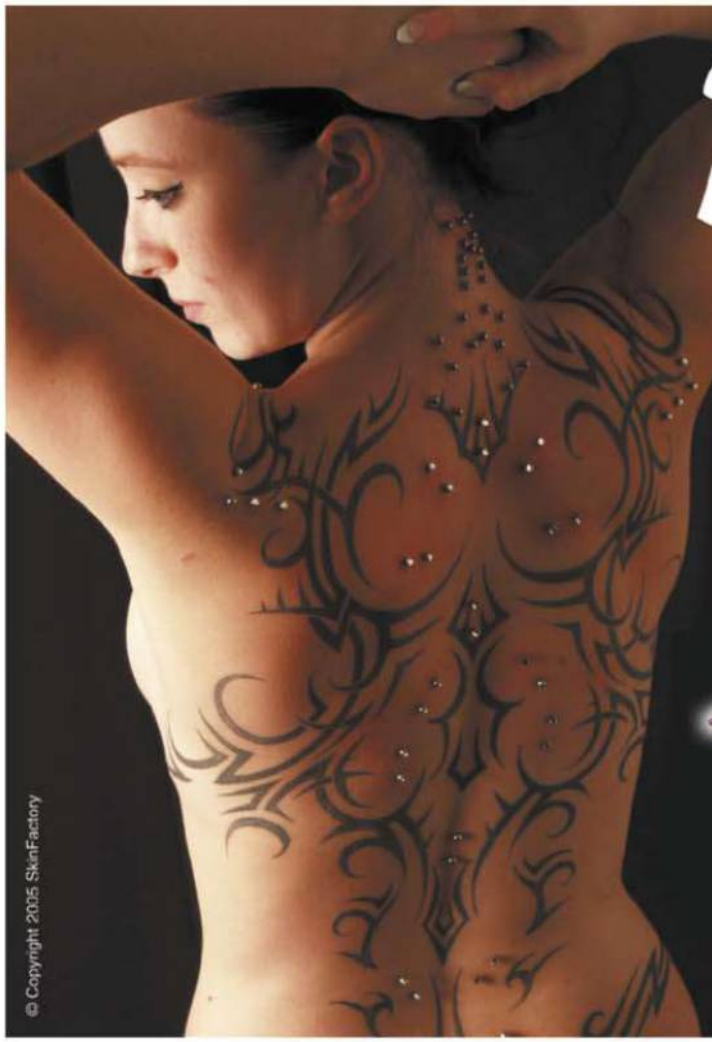

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Hi, My name is Jason Hawkins. I am a single male, 27 years old. I have quite a few tattoos and a few piercings. I like Korn, Morbid Angel etc. I am a Satanist and moral vampire, looking for female pen pals to write to and maybe something more later with some interest. I like partying, movies, concerts, tattoos and peircings and like to have fun. Write to me at: 1297282 Jason Hawkins. 3899 State Hay 99, new Boston. TX 7550 (189)

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Hey! My Name is Adam Smith and I am looking for two women. One called Jess the other is Rachael. If either (or both) could get in touch again, that would be great. I live in Fenny Compton and have a stammer. Please text me on: 07908969249 (189)

33 year old male, brown hair, eyes, 5'8", smoker, tattooed inmate, looking for any wild and fun loving female pen pals of the same age. I'm out soon so come on girls! Russell Francks A6646AT HMP Springhill, Grendon Underwood, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP18 0TL (189)

Hello, my name is Jimmy. I am looking for a female pen pal to helps me pass the time away. I am a prisoner in the state of Alabama, USA. I have a life sentence. I am s/w/m, Age 43, 5'9" muscular built, 165 pounds. I am a Leo. I am looking for a single female pen pal. Age is not important. My interests include, Harley motorcycles, writing letters, reading, tattoos, horses, fast cars and body piercing. Please write to me at: Jimmy Aubrey Hardin 142503, 100 Warrior Lane 4-46, Bessemer, Al, USA 35023 Thanks! (189)

36yr old inked female G.S.O.H looking for a male for serious relationship/friendship, interests are tattoo conventions, getting inked, going to gigs/concerts average build (curvy) would like to meet someone with same interests. 07896294348 (189)

Hi, I'm Danny a gay guy living on the Linc's coast, young 55 heavily tattooed arms(sleeved), slim body looking for similar guy 20/40 for friendship to a genuine relationship. Text 07535358018 or e-mail tattdan@live.co.uk (189)

My name is Kath from the Co Durham area. I'm in need of some TLC. I'm fun loving, tattoos (work in progress!) Love to dance. Into horrors, comedies and a spiritualist. Who knows, you could be the lucky one I've been looking for! Text: 0779620087 (189)

Hi, I'm Dakari and I am male, age 33, waiting to make your acquaintance. I'm 6'1" tall, weighing 200lbs; just the right man to lift you off your feet. I enjoy reading, writing, poetry, dancing, singing and computer work. Unfortunately, I am incarcerated in an Alabama state prison, USA with a life sentence without parole and I need someone to help me pass the time away. I'm looking for you if you are single/divorced and want to correspond with a good man, females only, age not important as long as you are genuine. Write to: Dakari Ai Parker Snr 205051, Y-3B 100 Warrior Lane. Bessemer, AL 35023, USA (189)

Hi ladies, I'm looking for pen pals & more. I'm 26 years old, inot all kinds of tunes, loves bikes and cars. Into the gym and other sports, currently in hospital. Great s.o.h, love assertive ladies, good looking, 5'10", age, looks unimportant. It's what's inside that counts! Get in touch, write me at Rampton hospital, Retford. Notts. DNZZ OPD Shaun Prenderville 1750 (189)

Long-haired, tattooed Ville Valo lookalike, g.o.s.h, genuine, kind, loving, caring & artistic. Into Rammstein, Appocoliptica, Manson, 69 Eyes, Nightwish, tattoos and piercings. Seeks female pen pals, age appearance, location unimportant. Contact Gavin Freeman "A0994AP" HMP Erlestoke, Devizes, Wiltshire. SN10 5TU (189)

Very shy and inexperienced 36 y/o guy, seeking open-minded females for texting fun and to help me overcome my shyness. Txt: 07902549639 (189)

Male, single, 48 slim, intelligent and caring. Nottingham based into art, music, poetry. Seeks female for relationship. Text: 07935321966 (189)

Hi I'm Doc, 42, 6', short dark hair and a lot of ink with more to come. I'm looking for a tattooed girl who can make me laugh. Slim or medium build. Someone who doesn't take herself too seriously, as I don't. Age not important, but personality is. Bi or single mums very welcome. If you think that this could be you, text me on: 07531724930 (189)

30 Year-old Bisexual female, would like to meet other females 25-35 for fun and maybe more! I'm curvy & busty with tattoos. Text me on; 07593709762 (189)

Lonely, domesticated and house trained male looking for my Goddess to worship! I am looking for my 'Mrs Right' between the ages of 25-45 to make my life and heart complete again. I'm no way perfect to look at but if you have depth, that shouldn't matter. I'm open-minded and adaptable. No time wasters, slappers or liars. I'm into tattoos, drawing, films, concerts, reading, writing & having a laugh. Text me on: 07908969249 (188)

Youthful, mature male, tall, slim and fun loving. Into tattoos, rock music, BDSM art and travel. seeks a petite, happy female, any age to share good times together. Contact the Artful Dodger. Txt: 07576445722 (188)

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I am a 26 year-old male living in the west Yorkshire area. I have worked in a well-established tattoo studio, as an apprentice and now that I'm fully trained I'm looking for a more responsible role. I have a natural artistic ability, so I tend to do lots of free hand tattoos and original artwork. I specialise in realistic black and gray work but do enjoy colour work and the more traditional tattoos. I see myself as a very polite, responsible, friendly and hard working individual. I have no drug/alcohol problems. I have a Full UK driving license and I am willing to travel for work. My Portfolio is available at request. Any interest/inquiries please do not hesitate to contact. Luke Williamson 07394714653 Lukewilliamson_design@hotmail.com (188)

Hi my name is Glen Pollitt, I'm looking for a tattooing apprenticeship somewhere in the Manchester area I'm currently in my last year of the army and so would only be able to come into shop at weekends but I'm a keen artist and love tattooing and want to make this my life. I am a fast learner and with spending the last 6 years in the army I am a very positive and a good worker. I'm currently working on my portfolio but what little I have I'm more than willing to travel to show my work if you are interested please e-mail me at

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glenpollitt@hotmail.com or phone me on 07805659381 (188)

My name is Claire, I am 29 years old and I am looking for a position/apprenticeship in a tattoo studio in the south Wales area. I currently live near Swansea, but am willing to travel. I have a passion for art and tattoos and i have excellent drawing skills. I consider myself to be bright, reliable, honest, imaginative and hardworking. I would love the opportunity to finally achieve my life-long dream of becoming a tattoo artist. No drug/drink problems, just loads of enthusiasm. Please contact: Claire on 07977144300 or claire.evs@hotmail.com (188)

Hi, I am looking to gain some studio experience as either a receptionist or a trainee piercer. I have been piercing myself and others for a while now and would love to make a full time job of it. The piercings I have been doing have been fairly basic so would love for the opportunity to train under someone with the experience to help me progress to a professional level. I'm 27 and definitely have my head on my shoulders. I'm located in East Sussex, so anywhere within a reasonable travel distance would be ideal. If you have been thinking of taking on someone new, please feel free to contact me. Email me at monkey82@hotmail.co.uk Phone 07956655811 (188)

JOBS OFFERED

Full or part-time 2nd artist required for busy modern tattoo studio in Shropshire. Must have at least 3 years (shop) tattooing experience and portfolio of recent work. No apprentices needed. Family run fun shop. Call 07790047207 or Email rena.fincham@sky.com (189)

Ink lab tattoo studio in Goole, East Yorkshire is looking for a new full time tattoo artist with at least 3 years shop experience. References will be required. Must have high standards and a solid and varied portfolio. Must be clean, reliable and work well in a team. If you are interested please contact Rich on 01405 762566 or at www.inklabtattoos.co.uk No time wasters please. (189)

Birmingham ink tattoo studio is looking for a body modification apprentice, (piercing, branding, scarification, implants, etc), applicants must be 20+ years, hard work and dedication is essential, Apply in person only. BIRMINGHAM INK TATTOO, 66 DALTON STREET, CITY CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM, B4 7LX (189)

Large central Oxford Tattoo Studio has room for guest spots and full time trained tattoo artist. Impressive portfolio and references essential. No apprentices. Contact Mick on 07900 241765 or mickdurham@aol.com (189)

Tattooist required for busy high street studio In Potters Bar Hertfordshire. Michael Rose Visual Art has a permanent or part time position available. Must have a minimum 4 years studio experience and a strong portfolio. To arrange an interview please contact us at info@michaelrosevisualart.com you can find out more about us and the studio by visiting our website: www.michaelrosevisualart.com. Please don't apply if you are an apprentice unless you have lots of drawings/ sketches to show us. (189)

Professional Tattoo Artist required to join busy studio in South Wales. Pretty Hot & Tattoo'd are looking for a clean, reliable tattoo artist who is skilled and experienced in different styles and has an extensive portfolio. Hours are negotiable. Studio Experience is essential, and a trial period will be necessary. No apprentices please. Please send cv/cover letter and sample portfolios to Pretty Hot & Tattoo'd Ltd, 42 Penybont Road, Pencoed. BRIDGEND. CF35 5RA or e-mail phattattoostudio@hotmail.co.uk. (189)

Large central Oxford Tattoo Studio has room for guest spots and full time trained tattoo artist. Impressive portfolio and references essential. No apprentices. Contact Mick on 07900 241765 or mickdurham@aol.com (189)

Tattoo artists (2) with minimum of three years studio experience required to join the King Arthur's Tattoo team. The positions are for immediate start, initially for the summer but with a view to becoming permanent fixture for the right applicants. The successful applicants must be comfortable with all styles of tattooing and have excellent drawing skills as we are primarily custom studios, but still have to do flash work when required! Please only apply if you have the relevant experience, no wannabes, no scratchers, no alcoholic's o drug addictions and no apprentices. An up to date portfolio is essential when applying, this can be emailed to: kingarthurstattoo@googlemail.com or call: 01723 364710 ad ask for Stuart. (189)

FOR SALE

Busy Est Tattoo Business for sale in the Derbyshire area, due to relocation. Precinct location. Large 2 floor studio to house multiple artists and large waiting room. Further rooms above, suitable for extra studio or piercing room with separate large waiting room. Negotiable lease. Low rent at £375 per calendar month, property qualifies for small business rates relief. Enquiries by email only - lee1138@hotmail.co.uk (188)

ESTABLISHED BUSY TATTOO & BODY PIERCING STUDIO FOR SALE. Situated just outside of Coventry city centre in a busy shopping area, fully fitted / equipped modern and pleasant styled and furnished studio. Large Shop/ reception area with reception desk, sofa. Large Flash collection, two jewellery display cabinets. Separate large treatment room with two workstations. Separate clean room, Toilet, drawing Area, Photo copier, 42" plasma screen fitted, Large amount of jewellery, Low rent for area. This is a busy popular studio only selling due to leaving the country, Priced for quick sale at £40,000 you can more than make that back in the first year, Possible Owner financing over a two year period, for details please email shaun.weir@hotmail.com or call 07787249343 (186)

Busy est Tattoo Business for sale in the Derbyshire area, due to relocation. Precinct location. Large 2 floor studio to house multiple artists and large waiting room. Further rooms above, suitable for extra studio or piercing room with separate large waiting room. Negotiable lease. Low rent at £375 per calendar month, property qualifies for small business rates relief. Enquiries by email only - lee1138@hotmail.co.uk (186)

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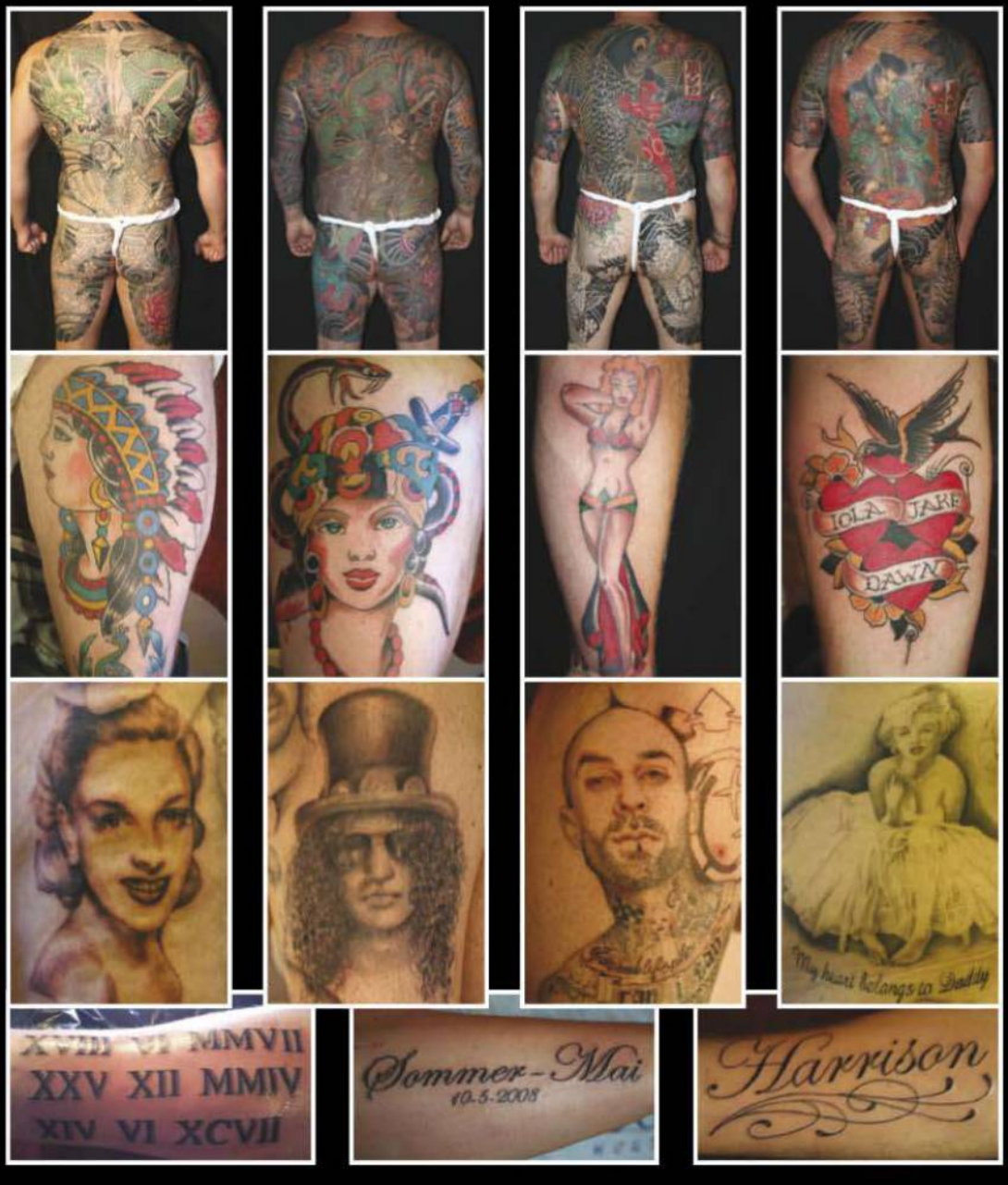

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